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The Times Literary Supplement

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	Holman Hunt demonstrating how he painted 'The Scapegoat'. The photograph, by an unknown photographer, was probably taken in Hunt's garden in about 1885; it is reproduced from <i>The Victorian Art World in Photographs</i> by Jeremy Maas (224pp. Hutchinson, £20.00, 153840 B)

Blood and its consequences

Peter Fawcett

ARTHUR-JOSEPH DE GOBINEAU

Oeuvres: Tome 2

Edited by Jean Guilmier

1309pp. Paris: Gallimard, 280fr.

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Les Pléiades

454pp.

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Adelphes, Mademoiselle Irénée: précédé de

Souvenirs de voyage

367pp.

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Edited by Hubert Juin.

Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions.

Gobineau prophesied once: "Je ne serai donc apprécié de mes contemporains [sic] que cent ans après ma mort." He had the misfortune to be little read during his lifetime and to be championed after his death by a German disciple of Wagner's at a time when French distrust of anything that found favour outside Rhin was at its height. Despite one or two surges of popularity - Proust declared himself "engobiné" in 1915 - his reputation as the father of modern racism and the identification of his views with some of the most obnoxious theories of National Socialism mean that he has remained, in Jean Mitterand's well-known phrase, "le plus grand méconnu du XIX^e siècle".

Now, thanks to the tireless efforts of Jean Guilmier, the present edition of Gobineau studies, his principal works are in the process of being published in three volumes in the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Last year saw the first critical edition of his infamous and monumental *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, a visionary work in the place of the second volume of the *Introduction à l'histoire universelle* or Hugo's *Légende des siècles*. The second volume contains writings from his Iranian cycle, together with *Souvenirs de voyage* and *Adelphes*. The third volume will comprise his most accomplished literary works, *Les Pléiades*, *Nouvelles Asiatiques* and *La Remittance*. Thus, as M. Guilmier points out, each volume will illustrate a different aspect of Gobineau's personality: the visionary, the traveller and the literary moralist.

Was Gobineau a racist? The answer is clearly no. In common with much of the best anthropological thinking of his day he merely regarded the degeneracy of mankind, as attributable to the evils of miscegenation. What he described to his English friend Robert Lytton as the only idea he had ever had in his life, "l'idée du sang et de ses conséquences", underlies all his work. But he saw no hope of either

halting or reversing the process. His vision was unbelievably pessimistic. Mankind was, as far as he was concerned, irretrievably doomed.

However, once some of his less palatable opinions are set aside, he emerges as a man of absorbing intellectual passions who must have been a delightful companion and who was far more capable than most members of his generation of entering with generosity into the spirit of whatever seemed strange and unfamiliar. He once told his daughter "il n'y a réellement au monde que les romans de chevalerie", and "l'amour des romans de chevalerie" was, he claimed, "un trait de famille". His most recent biographer has characterized him as a tragic Don Quixote. The major enterprise of his life, of which the *Essai* was only a part, was to trace his own genealogy back to the Viking pirate, Ottar Jarl, who settled in France in 843. It is as a writer of fiction, at odds with the realist tradition of the nineteenth-century novel, that he seems in the long run most likely to survive.

He began his literary career as a journalist in the 1840s. By the time of his marriage in 1846, he had turned his hand to the production of *romans-feuilletons* to make ends meet. The only one of his works of this period, and the only one prior to the *Essai*, to have successfully stood the test of time is the Balzacian short story, "Mademoiselle Irénée", which appeared in *Le National* in January and February 1847 and may have been inspired by the plight of his younger sister Caroline, whom a spinal injury forced to spend most of her life lying down. It is told with a verve and delicacy which make it extremely readable.

For twenty years, while pursuing the diplomatic career to which he was introduced by Tocqueville, Gobineau wrote no more fiction. He returned to the genre in 1868 under the influence of his love for the two Dragounis sisters, Marika and Zoé, daughters of a former minister to the deposed King Otho, whom he met during his mission in Athens. He began to develop a highly personal style of *nouvelle*, based on his acknowledged skill as a raconteur, in which a loose fictional framework would allow him to give free rein to his views and opinions on a wide range of topics.

The first such story was "Le Mouchoir rouge", a sombre tale of murder and revenge set in Cephalonia, which had probably been told to Gobineau by one of his Greek friends or learnt by him on the spot, and which belies his opening sentence: "Céphalonie est une île charmante." Gobineau never found it so, and did not like its inhabitants, whom he regarded as the products of a mixture of bloods.

This was followed by "La Chasse au caribou", in which Gobineau drew on his visit to Newfoundland as a member of a fisheries commission in 1859. Here he tells the story of a naive young Frenchman who goes to the island in search of adventures worth the retelling and

ends up engaged in error to an American Grace Darling. It is a kind of *L'Hégémonie* in reverse, and, while mocking the stupidity of his compatriot, Gobineau makes plain his admiration for the island's inhabitants, "ces natures brutales", each one of them a formidable colossus.



Gobineau in 1868.

But nothing in the New World can possibly equal the delights of Naxos, recalled from Rio de Janeiro in September 1869, in "Akrivie Phrangopoulou". This story is based on Gobineau's own voyage to the Cyclades two years earlier on an English corvette captained by Lindsay Brine and on "les réveries que Brine et moi avons faites sur le bonheur de vivre dans une pareille île sans avoir plus rien de commun avec la monde". Its hero, Henry Norton, modelled on Brine, falls in love with the beautiful Naxiot girl whose name appears in the title and who is described as "la femme des temps homériques", his "belle au bois dormant", the precious flower of this island paradise where nothing has changed since the Crusades. By virtue of his Englishness - "cette race normande, la plus agissante, la plus ambitieuse, la plus turbulente, la plus intéressée de toutes les races du globe, est en même temps la plus portée à reconnaître et à pratiquer le renoncement aux choses" - Norton has the courage to relinquish his command and settle down with his bride, becoming one of those rare "déserteurs du beau monde" Gobineau

claimed to have encountered in every quarter of the globe. First, however, he takes his hosts on a pleasure-trip to the neighbouring islands, which becomes the occasion for an entertaining digression, relating to a descent into the great cave on Antiparos, about the worthlessness of subterranean tourism where one ends up, after risking life and limb, unable to see "qu'il que ce soit qui vaille la peine d'être cherché à trois pas", as well as for a magnificent Wagnerian description of continued volcanic activity on Santorini following the eruption of 1866.

These three stories, written primarily to amuse the Dragounis sisters, were gathered together and, with "Akrivie Phrangopoulou" as the centre-piece, published in 1872 under the title *Souvenirs de voyage*. There should perhaps have been a fourth story in the shape of "Adelphes", written in a single day in December 1869, but it referred to persons still living and did not, therefore, appear during Gobineau's lifetime. When it was eventually published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in 1913, it was immediately recognized as one of his masterpieces and Gide would have done better to mention it, rather than *Les Pléiades*, when he spoke of Rudinot's debt to Gobineau, as it prefigures *Le Bal du vicomte d'Orgel* to a remarkable degree.

Also originally intended for *Souvenirs de voyage*, but too late to be included, was "La Danseuse de Shamakha", which became instead the first of the *Nouvelles asiatiques*, based on Gobineau's missions in Persia in 1855-58 and 1861-63. In September 1872 he wrote to Marika Dragounis from Stockholm: "J'ai inventé à Athènes cette manière de nouvelles que j'ai la prétention de donner pour originales et bien à moi; mais c'est ici que je l'ai perfectionnée." The new stories he regarded as superior to those he had already written, and their purpose, as stated in the preface to the published volume in 1876, was to show "ce que sont devenus aujourd'hui les premiers civilisateurs du monde, les premiers conquérants, les premiers savants, les premiers théologues que la planète ait connus", so as to invite the reader to reflect "sur certains signes qui se produisent actuellement en Europe, et qui ne sont pas sans présenter des analogies avec la même décadence". In point of fact, only three out of the six stories are set wholly or mainly in Persia and, though they have been highly praised for the understanding they show of Asian character, the viewpoint throughout remains distinctly European.

"La Danseuse de Shamakha" itself, which is comparable in style and structure to "Akrivie Phrangopoulou", turns out to be the story of a Caucasian Electra, whose Orestes has been corrupted by contact with Western civilization since the Legian village in which they were brought up, perched like an eyria on top of a

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Classics and fakes

Emrys Jones

A. M. GIBBS
The Art and Mind of Shaw
 224pp. Macmillan. £20.
 0333 286790

Shaw's critical reputation continues unstable. Or rather, he has a number of different reputations, according to which critical set you choose to frequent. The small community of Shawian academics are quite clear among themselves of his major status: from their angle he is a peer of Yeats, Lawrence and Joyce, and second only to Shakespeare as an English-language dramatist (though of course the number of serious competitors for this position is not large). Outside this circle, the picture looks quite different. None of the schools of criticism now dominant has much time for him. Not only is it not agreed what his best plays are, it's not accepted that any of them are much more than pleasant entertainments which are in any case becoming badly dated. The recently revised *Pelican Guide to English Literature* has seen no reason to modify its 1961 judgment that as a creative artist Shaw was only a minor figure. And in his book on modern drama, also revised, Raymond Williams is probably speaking for many when he says, "Shaw's dynamic as a dramatist has now largely weakened" — he is no longer of much importance.

Away from the lecture-rooms and classrooms, however, Shaw is neither unread nor unperformed. Most of his plays and even a couple of his novels can be bought in paperback, while the National Theatre has kept up a flow of large-scale Shaw productions. Presumably he is still quite a good commercial proposition. None the less, opinion about him remains unsettled and fragmentary, as the current *Saint Joan* at the Olivier has amply brought out. Several reviewers declared a basic dissatisfaction with the play. For them, as perhaps for a good many others, *Saint Joan* has

come to seem, not a genuine classic but a detected fake, one of yesterday's costume-dramas with pretensions above its station. Of course, not everyone would agree. Twenty years ago, in his big Oxford volume on modern English literature, the usually judicious J. I. M. Stewart showed no hesitation either in including Shaw among his eight modern masters or in finding *Saint Joan* "certainly his outstanding play, conceivably the finest and most moving English drama since *The Winter's Tale* or *The Tempest*". In the face of such extreme diversity of assessment there is clearly room for some critical mediation of a straightforwardly helpful kind.

The Art and Mind of Shaw is not quite the work that will perform this service. A. M. Gibbs is an independent-minded critic, but he concurs with the professed admirers in finding Shaw a great dramatist — indeed "one of the vital geniuses". But although he takes note of the adverse judgments passed on Shaw, he gives little space to combating them directly. Instead he gets down to the business of detailed criticism, of making a "case against" *Candida* or of promoting *You Never Can Tell* as a "festive comedy" rather in interest than often supposed. He operates within the consensus already established by the Shaw specialists; and in these terms his "essays in criticism" are always intelligent and well argued. They are grounded on a knowledge of the entire Shawian corpus — novels, criticism, pamphlets and political books, the huge correspondence, and not only the plays themselves but also their drafts, which are occasionally made to yield new light on the finished versions. The procedure is unpretentiously revisionist and provisional: it proposes a great many adjustments to prevailing views, while seeming to accept that the argument over Shaw is still at an early stage and will go on for a long time yet. But one adjustment is more drastic than the rest. Although Gibbs discusses eighteen of his plays, from the Dickensian-Marxist *Widowers' Houses* to the very late Orient-facing fantasies,

he gives no chapter to *Saint Joan*. He leaves it out, he says, not in a spirit of dismissal, but from a belief that it has had more than its fair share of attention. Whether intentionally or not, however, his omission of the play must have the effect of sharply demoting it, and in doing so of raising the question where, in Shaw's colossal output, we should locate the indispensable core of his work — if indeed any of his work can now be said to be of pressing interest to us. Professor Gibbs's answer to this question is admirably direct. Four plays have "major scope and significance", and for him it is on these, pre-eminently, that Shaw's claim to classic status rests. The first three are the Edwardian social dramas, *Man and Superman*, *John Bull's Other Island* and *Major Barbara*, seen here as linked by their attempt to relate visionary idealism to mundane reality; the fourth is *Heartbreak House* which, as Gibbs presents it, is possibly Shaw's deepest, most urgent, imaginative effort.

I agree with Gibbs in finding Shaw a large figure of considerable interest and even fascination. But Gibbs needs to concede much more than he has to the opposing camp. Shaw's mixed strengths and weaknesses confront the critic with a difficult task of discrimination and judgment. Every one of the four plays offered by Gibbs as comprising Shaw's central achievement is, I think, more seriously flawed and limited than he allows, impressive in other respects though it may be. For all *Man and Superman*'s flashes of wit and bounding oratorical energy, it's finally a tiresome and even tedious play, whose failings have quite as much to do with the dully predictable Ann Whitefield as with the bumptious Jack Tanner. Shaw's best plays usually turn on the opposition of well-matched antagonists, whereas Jack is merely ground down by the force of (largely female) inertia. Of course the reduction of Jack is in line with the play's "philosophy" of artist and woman, but the final impression made by Shaw's attack on Edwardian stolidity is that it is itself stuffily over-upholstered. *John Bull's*

Shaw's best plays are not necessarily those which proclaim their social responsibility and public importance. Professor Gibbs relegates *Pygmalion* to the second rank of Shaw's work, along with such evidently slighter things as *Midnight and Androcles and the Lion*. I think myself that *Pygmalion*, which Shaw called "A Romance in Five Acts", may very well be his best play. But in any case Shaw's strongest achievements should not be thought confined to his plays. One of his masterworks, which looks better and better as time passes, is *Our Theatres in the Nineties*. Shaw was by far the best theatre critic we have ever had, superbly equipped for every aspect of the job. It may be that eventually — "ultimately" — his criticism, musical as well as dramatic, will bulk much larger in our overall estimate than it does now.

mountain peak, was destroyed by the Russian invaders. Similarly, "Les Amants de Kandahar", a complex tale of love and honour, stands out as an Afghan version of *Romeo and Juliet*, which, although frequently regarded as one of Gohineau's most ordinary stories, can equally be seen as one of his best for its raciness and the beautiful descriptions of love it contains. Of the stories set in Persia, "Histoire de Gamher-Aly" and "La Guerre des Turcomans" portray in a picturesque vein the system of patronage and extortion on which the modern state survived, notably in "La Guerre des Turcomans" where the account of military incompetence foreshadows Céline's hilarious depiction of the First World War; whereas "L'Illustre Magicien" is acknowledged to be an Arabian Nights-style transposition of Gohineau's last great love, for Mathilde de la Tour, the young wife of the Italian ambassador in Stockholm, with whom he formed a pact of everlasting friendship at the Norwegian king's coronation in 1873.

The last of the stories, fittingly entitled "La Vie de voyage", tells of a journey, undertaken by Gohineau in the opposite direction, by a newly married Italian couple between Erzerum and Tabriz. The great caravan of two thousand people is seen as a town on the move, ruled over by the Muses-like figure of the chief muleteer, "le plus despotique et le plus inflexible des législateurs", and its life of "vagabondage organisé" as the most natural expression of "le caractère et l'esprit des Asiatiques". It all proves too much for the Europeans (as it had done for Mme Gohineau), and, having had their fill of mystery and adventure, they end up by cutting their journey short.

Gohineau possessed the inestimable gift as a traveller of being tirelessly curious about variations in human behaviour, and this he imparted to his reader in the lively portraits of individuals of different nationalities and creeds which litter his work. Before he died he had started a further collection of *Nouvelles fœdales*. However, in 1871, in the aftermath of

the Franco-Prussian War, he had begun writing his "grand roman" of *Les Pliades*, which he saw as "le point culminant" of the form he had invented and in which he intended to abandon himself completely to his "sentiment vrai sur la société moderne". *Les Pliades* is the product of the Commune in the same way as the *Essai* had been of the 1848 revolution. The theme of the novel is stated in a letter to Count Prokesch-Osten, one-time Austrian ambassador in Constantinople, to whom he wrote: "Je finis aussi un roman très développé intitulé *Les Pliades* ayant pour base cette idée, qu'il n'y a plus de peuples, mais seulement, dans toute l'Europe, quelques individualités surgissant comme des débris sur un déluge."

Les Pliades is undoubtedly one of the strangest pieces of fiction ever written. It is a cross between a romance of chivalry and Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and *Elective Affinities*. It begins superbly with a descent into Italy by stage-coach along the shores of Lake Maggiore and the encounter of three young men of differing nationalities, "puissances de la même espèce", on their way to Isola Bella. The most articulate of the three is the Englishman, Wilfrid Nore, and it is he who defines them as "trois calenders, fils de Rois" and defends the right of those "êtres lumineux", who in each generation stand apart from the crowd, to "se qualifier de Pliades". Each of them proceeds to tell his life-story, but it is only the Frenchman, Louis Laudon, modelled on Acaeste in *Le Misanthrope*, who at this stage is willing to reveal to the others his amorous affairs, showing a lack of "réserve" for which he is sharply rebuked by Nore. They then split up, having agreed to meet again in the autumn in the home town of the third member of the trio, Conrad Lanze, a German.

It is around this tiny principality of Burbach that much of the rest of the novel is centred. It is governed by the melancholy Jean-Théodore, who, like most modern rulers, is reduced to the level of a puppet in his public functions. One by one, each of the "Pliades", to whom must be added the colourful and eccentric Countess

Tonska and Conrad's younger sister Liliane, achieves a form of happiness, mostly through love, but only after a great deal of suffering. Jean-Théodore himself, who gradually emerges as the book's major character, abdicates his throne and almost dies of a broken heart, before the providential death of his estranged first wife allows him to set up home with his uncle's stepdaughter in a secluded chalet far from the haunts of civilization. There can be no doubt that wishful thinking about the outcome of his own affair with Mathilde de la Tour made Gohineau — who was not above wanting his own wife dead — profoundly change the course of the novel during the process of composition. To Prokesch-Osten, who was shocked by the amount of love it contained, he replied: "Vous prononcez le mot de *maladie*; c'est parfaitement exact; un amour comme celui-là est une maladie... mais c'est en maladie des âmes fortes... Je l'ai donnée aux Pliades: ai-je eu tort?" Within the book itself, love is defined as a "maladie sacrée, mais horrible et confinant à la folie". It is an ordeal by which each of the characters, like a medieval knight, is put to the test. One of the key images of the novel, present from its opening pages, is that of a turbulent mountain stream which creates havoc and destruction in its wake and only opens out into a broad and expansive river when it reaches the plain. It is as though each of the "Pliades" must ride the rapids of uncontrolled passion before attaining the serenity that is their ultimate reward.

Although *Les Pliades* turns out eventually to be mainly about love, it contains some astringent pages about the nature of modern society, notably in Nore's opening monologue where he divides the mass of human beings, with a Célinian vigour, into the three categories of "les imbéciles", "les drôles" and "les brutes". Elsewhere it is suggested that more

than ever it is the duty of "l'honnête homme, l'homme qui se sent une âme" to "se replier sur lui-même, et ne pouvant soulever les autres, de travailler à s'améliorer", and, in a lapidary phrase which sums up the whole of Gohineau's philosophy, "l'ensemble est petit, misérable, honteux, répugnant. L'être isolé s'élève". What Méméme termed his "bosse de l'observation comique" is apparent in the description of the results of distribution by the English Bible societies in Asia: "Les Chinois s'en servent en guise de tuiles pour les maisons; les Perses, plus littéraires, appliquent les versets à l'habillage de leurs propres livres." But his skills of character-creation are rudimentary and nearly all the inhabitants of the world of *Les Pliades* emerge as interchangeable, the men being based on himself and the women either on his wife and daughters or on Madame de la Tour, according to whether they are meant to be unpleasant or pleasant.

The novel is basically, like the *Essai* and Gohineau's other works, an attempt at personification of mythologization. This is what gives it the appearance of a magnificent, but flawed, epic. One suspects that Gohineau might have chosen as its epitaph the lines he wrote in *La Vie* may be a fragment of its lost sequel, *Les Pliades*, intended to be "le superlatif de *Pliades*", concerning the nineteenth-century Swedish epic, *Fritiofs saga*, which he had written as:

de ces livres comme tous les peuples n'en possèdent et qui par leurs défauts, par leurs lacunes, par leurs faiblesses même, par leurs prétentions plutôt qu'par ce qu'ils peuvent réellement donner, se sont ainsi une population profonde et durable auprès de l'imagination pour lesquelles elles ont été créées et n'est rien plus heureux dans le destinée d'un livre.

As Remy de Gourmont is reported to have said, "Gohineau est quelqu'un. Il compte".

Appointment in Berlin

George D. Painter

CHATEAUBRIAND
 Correspondance générale: Tome IV,
 1er janvier 1821 à 30 mars 1822
 Edited by Pierre Riberette
 430pp. Paris: Gallimard, 210fr.
 2070260615

During the perhaps all-too-brief Second Restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France from 1815 to 1830, it was often found convenient to send temporarily unwanted statesmen abroad as ambassadors. Such was the fate of Chateaubriand, who was kicked upstairs, after governmental crises which he helped to solve, to the plum embassies of Europe, Berlin in 1821, London in 1822 and Rome in 1828.

A cold coming he had of it in January 1821, ice-floes in the Rhine delayed his crossing, and Berlin froze in carnival-time. He warmed up when Frederica, Duchess of Cumberland (wife of Ernest, the blackest sheep of all George IV's brothers), took his arm to lead off the first polonaise. A platonic royal romance ensued, they met every afternoon in the park of Charlottenburg when spring came, and she wrote to him almost daily after he left. In the mornings he fed the friendly crows of Unter den Linden with crusts from his breakfast-room window, and then wrote the brilliant dispatches included here to his foreign minister Pasquier, and the enormous private correspondence to his party contacts in Paris, and to his dear, indispensable political hostesses and Egerias, Mme de Duras and Mme Récamier.

This was the disappointed winter of the Congress of Laibach (modern Ljubljana), when the Holy Alliance met to put down revolution in Naples, preceded by Spain and Portugal and followed by Piedmont and Greece. "So the interests of millions are in the hands of about twenty coxcombs at a place called Laibach", wrote Byron. Chateaubriand would dearly have liked to be one of these, but duty tied him to Berlin, until in April he demanded and received home leave in Paris, and resumed his party task.

France then contributed no parliamentary activity for almost two years while moving to

the right, polarizing away from an anti-dynastic opposition of Orleansists, crypto-republicans and neo-Bonapartists, whose victory would have been catastrophically premature, though all had their turn in later generations, and survive as assimilated ingredients in the soul of modern France. Historians have underrated Chateaubriand's role, in this crucial hinge-year of the Restoration, as tactician, propagandist and linkman with the far-pressure-group known as *les Impartiaux*, who were still more royalist than the royalist Louis Villèle, and held the balance of voting power in the Chamber of Deputies. Chateaubriand pushed his chiefs into ministerial rank before leaving for Berlin, and now, by the paradoxical ploy of resigning with them in July, he enabled the collapse of Richelieu's centre-right government and their take-over in December 1821. Then he tactfully withdrew, one step further from the sky the only limit?

All this is in these letters, and also in a magical eplaque of the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (Book 26), with which it is fascinating to compare them. Pierre Riberette does magnificently for Chateaubriand what Mme Jasinski did for Mme de Sévigné and Philip Kolb for Goethe, gathering, collating, dating, placing in sequence and annotating in depth a vast correspondence and a major but hitherto unusable primary source for the life and times of a great writer. This volume he has added a quarter of unpublished letters, with new archival material including Pasquier's return dispatches to Chateaubriand, and reports from a postscript code-named the Secret Observer, who knew almost everything and turns out to be Chateaubriand's trusted manservant Louis. "Why do they go to such trouble?" comments his different employer, "if they wanted to see what I write, why didn't they ask me? I have written from my friends, not from my enemies."

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The ways of the Buryats

R. W. Davies

CAROLINE HUMPHREY
Karl Marx Collective: Economy, society and religion in a Siberian collective farm
524pp. Cambridge University Press. £30 (paperback, £10.95).
0521 244560

This study of Soviet rural communities fails to fulfil the requirements of "normal" social anthropology. The author was able to undertake field-work only for a few weeks; and she conducted most of her interviews in Russian, not in the native language, sometimes in the presence of her Russian supervisor.

But as a contribution to our knowledge of the Soviet Union it is a remarkable achievement. Most Western students of the Soviet countryside have been able to pay only a fleeting visit to a collective farm; some have never even seen a Soviet peasant. Caroline Humphrey spent several weeks in two collective farms in remote Buryatia in 1966, living in a collective farmer's cottage, talking at great length to the inhabitants, often unaccompanied; and revisited one of the farms seven years later. She brought to her task a shrewd and inquiring mind, an imaginative understanding of the Soviet system and a sound training in social anthropology. She places her direct oral evidence in the context of a thorough investigation of published material on peasants and collective farming in Buryatia, which constitutes the larger part of the book.

The Buryats, a people of Mongolian origin, live on either side of Lake Baikal in Eastern Siberia. In the twentieth century their pastoral and partly nomadic society has been drastically modernized and Sovietized. The very high infant mortality which was prevalent before the revolution has been eliminated, as has the scourge of venereal disease. Forty per cent of the population now live in the towns, to which half the young people of the village migrate. The wooden houses of the collective farmers, often built according to a standard Soviet model, are equipped with standard Soviet furniture, radios, sewing-machines and crockery; traditional furniture and other items of the old culture are rarely seen. Dr Humphrey remarks on the "astounding and perhaps admirable uniformity in material life".

In the most distant corners of the Soviet Union rural workers live in the same standard house, wear the same padded jacket (*vanitki*), eat the same brand of tinned sprats.

Those tinned sprats will be familiar to everyone who has lived in the Soviet Union.

And the collective farms of Buryatia are a standard unit in the vast and all-pervading Soviet economic and political system. The collective farm is organized on standard lines, as a hierarchy of occupations carrying differing status and powers; it is subject to the controls of district and republican party and government authorities, and to the state plan which compels it to produce stipulated quantities of agricultural and livestock products for sale to the state.

The Buryats have thus been integrated into the Soviet system; but this superficial uniformity is only one aspect of the story. The very process of integration has maintained major features of Buryat culture. It is true that kinship groups no longer determine residence or operate as production units; but kinship remains a powerful social institution: it provides mutual help, and a safety-net in time of trouble; it is used by leading officials in the collective farm to assist their work; and sometimes assists their promotion. But above all, as Humphrey sees it, it provides a Buryat identity and an absolute status counterposed to the inequality of the farm and the arbitrary and inflexible world of work. This is the reverse of the position in Europe, where often it is kinship which is seen as restrictive and work as liberating.

The Buryat sense of identity is strongly reinforced by traditional festivals and rituals, continued today in adapted form. Attempts to provide Soviet alternative rituals—such as the "Day of the Shepherd"—have remained more or less routine political occasions, and have not meshed with Buryat culture. Buryat religion was a mixture of shamanism with the lamaist

version of Buddhism, with some orthodox Christianity thrown in. Organized lamaism has almost vanished—in 1897 ten per cent of the population were lamas, now there are fewer than 100 officially recognized lamas. And the summer festival (*nuur-khurban*) has been successfully taken over by the collective farm.

But beliefs linger on. According to a Soviet survey carried out in 1967, forty-six per cent of Buryats believed in the coming of the fifth Buddha. And the great lamaist festival of *tsagluun* ("White Month") held in February at the beginning of milking has continued intact, unrecognized by any Soviet institution. The triumph of the faith and the defeat of heresy are celebrated, and kinship is honoured. Funerals are almost always solemnized in lamaist and shamanist form; some villages young children, who have not yet acquired souls, are buried in open coffins so that wild animals and birds can eat the flesh. Marxist ideology cannot provide an alternative rite, or cope with the problem of suffering. And most weddings are still celebrated in somewhat modified traditional forms, though nowadays young people choose their own partners. Humphrey's description of the elaborate procedures of a Buryat wedding, spread over many months, will astenish even those accustomed to the exuberance and protractedness of Russian or even Georgian social occasions. A "modest" wedding in 1967 cost both the bride's and the groom's family the equivalent of the annual wage of a highly skilled worker.

This brings us back to the collective-farm economy. All Soviet collective farms unofficially aim at acquiring what Humphrey terms "manipulable resources" in products and money, which they can use for exchange with suppliers, unofficial rewards to farm-workers and other purposes. In the Buryat case a major further use of these resources is to support the public festivals. And the Buryat collective farmer raises livestock on the private plot not only, like every other Soviet farmer, to earn money on the market to purchase consumer

goods, but also to support the various festivals (the modest wedding consumed twelve sheep, three cows and a calf, nearly half the total expenditure).

Humphrey's account also shows the heterogeneity of Soviet economic organization. The title of her book is a misnomer, as she stayed not in one but in two collective farms, 300 miles apart, both confusingly named "Karl Marx", and both about the same size. Karl Marx, Barguzin, was one of the earliest established farms, with a long and on the whole successful history. The statue of one of the founders of Buryat collective farming, its first chairman, stands in the centre of the farm. Between Humphrey's two visits, Brezhnev's agricultural revolution had greatly increased the amount of building; and the local shop, which stocked only boots and tinned fish on her first visit, had a full range of clothing, consumer goods and foods in 1974. The farm was organized on modern lines, with agricultural experts heading specialist sectors for livestock and field farming. Education, hard work and political activity were much more important than kinship as criteria for promotion to prominent positions on the farm.

Karl Marx, Selenga, was a much more old-fashioned affair. It was organized into "mixed production brigades", each responsible for all agricultural activities in a particular area. Kinship was of much greater importance. Some kind of management scandal had occurred after Humphrey's visit in 1967; officials told her the farm was "uncultured" (*nekulturny*) and would not let her return there.

Yet it was the Selenga farm which was much more successful, because it managed to acquire more manipulable resources (this book is full of such surprises). This was partly because the land of the Barguzin farm was poor, and increasingly subject to flooding, but partly and perhaps mainly because the Selenga farm (for reasons which do not emerge clearly) was able to secure a more favourable plan from the higher authorities.

In the light of her study of Buryatia, Humphrey rejects many of the normal Soviet ideological assumptions about the Soviet system: the "command economy" hierarchical model is one-sided, because it ignores conflict, and ignores the role of informal social relations supporting and modifying the system. She rejects Bahro's notion of a society with a subalternity, based on subaltern relations, and ignores the point that a huge number of people in the hierarchy possess authority by controlling their own "subalterns" (even a shepherd has two or three sub-shepherds). Moreover, Humphrey is also sceptical about the view of Bahro and Hegedus that Soviet society is a system of organized irresponsibility. She argues that "it is quite possible for anyone to live a life in a certain detachment from the official world of prohibition and exhortation, and from its anti-world of intrigue, and at the same time retain an acute sense of responsibility". Humphrey's Soviet Union is an organic more complex, and perhaps more humane, than the more conventional abstractions.

The hook is not without its weaknesses. The author relies almost entirely on recent Soviet sources for her account of the development of collective farms before the 1960s; inevitably the story which emerges is blurred and somewhat biased. She has not been able to find very much from these sources about the social upheaval of the early 1930s, when 70 per cent of the animals perished in this livestock-killing economy. And, following these sources, the factory workers who went to the countryside in 1930-32 appear as the crucial external elements of change, though in fact they were not in her account, a minority of the large number of officials and other townspeople who went in. There are too many mistakes in the transliterated Russian: it is "brigade" not "brigid", "yarmarka" not "yarmark", "poriyadok" not "rasporiyadka"; Leon Feigtwanger has become "Lion Feightwanger"; these are minor blemishes. The book should be on the shelf of every student of Soviet affairs.

327 TLS March 30 1984 RELIGION

Eschewing the secular

Sheridan Gilley

ROGER H. MARTIN
Evangelicals United: Ecumenical stirrings in Pre-Victorian Britain, 1795-1830
230pp. Methuen, NJ: Scarecrow Press (distributed in the UK by Bailey Bros and Swinfen). £15.75.
08108 15869
DOREEN M. ROSMAN
Evangelicals and Culture
262pp. Creem Helm. £14.95.
07099 22531

Roger H. Martin's *Evangelicals United* might be better called "Evangelicals United and Divided", so careful a balance does the author hold between Evangelical union and schism. Evangelicalism, the strongest force in modern Protestantism, is now two hundred and fifty years old, but its scanty annals show how difficult it has proved to piece together its sharply splintered history. Martin has tried an institutional approach to the subject, by charting Evangelical efforts at interdenominational cooperation through four of those innumerable societies to Christianize and convert, which in the generation of William Wilberforce made British Protestantism the wonder of the world.

Martin derives the ideological impulse in Evangelical union from George Whitefield's moderate Calvinism, which took a middle way between the hyper-Calvinists and John Wesley's Evangelical Arminians. Baptists were also outside the paedobaptist Evangelical mainstream, while some Evangelical Anglicans held aloof from their Evangelical Dissenting brethren out of loyalty to the Church establishment. Thus the subject of Martin's first pan-Evangelical case-study, the Missionary Society (later the London Missionary Society) founded in 1795, had to compete with Baptist, Anglican and Wesleyan missions by 1820, when it had become a solely Congregationalist body fostering Congregationalist denominationalism.

Of the other institutions described in Martin's monograph, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society succeeded like no publishing concerns before them in pouring out millions of cheap tracts and testaments. But the Bible Society was not solely Evangelical, as it had a fringe membership of Unitarians and Roman Catholics, and the printing of the Apocrypha in its Continental editions of the Scriptures provoked attacks led by the Scottish Calvinist Robert Haldane, a lien in the nineteenth-century was against Arminians, Unitarians and Rome. The outcome was a Scottish secession from the Society, while its refusal to exclude Unitarians by a religious test resulted in the formation of a rival Trinitarian Bible Society. The Tract Society was more unitedly anti-papist and anti-Sectarian; but it fell foul of some of its Dissenting members by planning to publish Joseph Milner's pro-Anglican *Church History*. Indeed Martin's fourth example, the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, founded by a German Jewish convert and fired by expectations of the Second Coming, nearly foundered on Anglican-Dissenting rivalry, and survived only by becoming purely Anglican.

Martin chronicles the political pressures which helped defeat pan-Evangelicalism, notably the initial English Dissenting sympathies with the French Revolution which so moved the young Haldane, and strengthened Anglican Evangelical loyalty to the Establishment against High Church charges that Evangelicals were Jacobins. Political instability also fed the millenarian fantasies of Edward Irving, which divided Evangelical brother from brother. But Martin's stress rightly rests not on secular politics but on the irresistible pull of confessional loyalties, which were to make Victorian Christianity sectarian rather than multitudinarian, as all the Churches expanded on the basis of fiercer rivalries with one another. The pan-Evangelical idealists who had looked to a future united Christendom, the realists who had striven to temper denominationalism with charity, were like eclipsed by dogmatic enthusiasts who found their voice in the bitter *Record* newspaper, and who made their chief point of union in the later Evangelical Alliance and the ancient hatred of Rome.

Martin compares British Evangelicalism with the present-day English Left in its shared ideals and unfertile dissensions. Doreen M. Roshan is concerned with another ambiguity in Evangelicalism, its relationship with culture, in the light of Matthew Arnold's charges of philistinism. Her monograph is largely devoted to the Anglican Evangelicals of the Clapham Sect, who are generally conceded to have been cultivated people, and she discusses only a minority of Nonconformists, for want of good sources at a lower social level. But though her work might seem biased by its restricted choice of materials, she offers a delicately nuanced judgment on Evangelical attitudes to culture, partly defending but largely condemning them.

Some of the cruder stereotypes run quickly dismissed. Far from being irrationalists, Evangelicals even overvalued reason at the expense of the senses and imagination, regarding



An early work by Carpaccio, 'The Virgin and Child with Saint Dorothy' (1511 and 1514), circa 1480, will be offered at Sotheby's in their sale of Old Master Paintings on April 14.

Episcopal sham

Peter Hebblethwaite

JANGROOTAERS and JOSEPH A. SELLING
The 1983 Synod of Bishops "On the Relevance of the Family": An Exposition of the Event and an Analysis of its Texts
375pp. Leuven University Press.
906186 1535

"Synod" was the ordinary term used in the ancient Church for an episcopal assembly. In 1965 Pope Paul VI set up the "Roman Synod" as a way of continuing the work of the second Vatican Council (1962-5) and expressing "collegiality"—the truth that all the world's bishops form a team. Its function was to offer the Pope information and advice. At first it met every two years; at present it meets every three years. If nothing else, the successive Synods enabled bishops to come to know each other and so acted as dress rehearsals for the two conclaves of 1978. Without them, it is unlikely that Cardinal Karol Wojtyla would have been elected Pope.

Yet, Jan Grootaers and Joseph A. Selling maintain, Pope John Paul II does not have much use for the Synod. They show this by a thorough and exhaustive account of the first Synod of his pontificate. Their documentation—including texts in Latin—is as complete as anyone is ever likely to want. To judge by the careful choice of lay experts, who to a man and woman represented natural family-planning movements, the Pope's intention in selecting the Synod theme had been to reassert the teaching of the 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. But once assembled, the bishops showed their autonomy. Mere repetition was not enough. The meeting of the widespread non-compliance with the ban on artificial birth-control had to be discussed. And there was a quest for compassion towards the divorced and remarried. These concerns were reflected in the 41 "Propositions" which constituted the Synod's advice to the Pope. Selling remarks that "to read the Propositions is to encounter a

"mental cultivation" as a preservative against sensual gressness and against the revivalist and millenarian enthusiasm of the Evangelical extreme. Evangelicals produced their own reviews and light literature, and fostered a love of books and reading. But they differed among themselves, according to denomination and class, over the lawfulness of balls, concerts, dancing, card-playing and hunting. Wesleyans being stricter than Anglicans, and the ban on secular novel-reading proving powerless against the magic of Walter Scott.

Dr Roshan's indictment of them is more subtle, and is ultimately theological: it is here that she goes deeper than earlier annals of Evangelicalism. The Evangelical stress on soteriology eclipsed the doctrine of creation, and mankind in the mass was lost. The sharp distinctions between converted and nominal Christians, between reason and the passions, soul and body, God and the world, left the nominal Christians, the passions, the body and the world unredeemed. But in so far as these dwell in the realm of darkness, so culture lay in darkness wherever it touched upon them. Moreover, even at its best, culture was only an ornament, not an essential, and could too easily seem a waste of the time which should be used to prepare for eternity: there is a nice parallel and contrast here to the secular philistinism which dismissed culture as a distraction from making money. Thus religion sowed suspicion of every wholesome delight and, in the younger generation after 1820, bred a new extreme of other-worldliness. Even those Evangelicals who wanted to transform the world, to make it happy as well as holy, had no ultimate religious justification of the pleasures of which they approved. Moreover their suspicion of the secular in the realm of learning gave them no proper defence against the new science and criticism which assailed their bulwark, Holy Scripture, forcing them in the Victorian era into obscurantist doctrines of verbal inerrancy, and so into fundamentalism in our century.

spirit of enquiry and pastoral sensitivity to some of the more perplexing issues facing the Church.

It was what happened next that most distressed the authors, both—incidentally—married laymen. For the Synod's advice to the Pope was ignored in the ensuing document, *Familiaris Consortio*, though it was purportedly based on the 41 Propositions. *Familiaris Consortio*, they hold, would have been written in exactly the same way even if the Synod had never taken place. It follows that the appearance of consultation is a sham; and the Synod no longer represents a balancing force to papal absolutism.

The book appeared shortly before the start of the 1983 Synod, devoted to "Reconciliation and Penance in the Mission of the Church". Its importance may be judged by the fact that Archbishop Jozef Tomko, Secretary of the Synod, tried to reply to it on the opening day. He was "authorized to reveal", he declared as though about to pull a rabbit out of his hat, "that the first draft of *Familiaris Consortio* had been composed by the Synod Council". So it was, he claimed, as much the work of the Synod as of the Pope, and had the authority of both. This was a gallant attempt to prevent a wedge being driven between Synod and Pope. But it left Grootaers and Selling unmoved: for they were comparing two available texts, while Tomko was inviting the Synod to see the profound harmony between a final text and an unavailable first draft.

A further irony is that the two authors, in writing the history of the 1981 Synod, found themselves predicting the course of that of 1983. They compare the shape of events at the Synod to a "funnel": after the wide-ranging and optimistic speeches of the first week and a half, the Synod gradually narrows down until it reaches the final Propositions; and the subsequent document is narrower still. It is a scenario for disappointment and anti-climax. This thesis will not endear its authors to the Vatican; but it is a necessary starting-point for the full-scale reform of an institution that has not realized its original goals.

O to be an Mbuti

I. M. Lewis

COLIN M. TURNBULL
The Human Cycle
283pp. Cape. £9.95.
0224 021737

Exotic cultures outside the European tradition have always provided convenient ammunition for moral commentaries on Western society. They may be appealed to as grim warnings of life without the benefits of Western civilization, or invoked to underline the inadequacies of life in modern, industrial states. As Colin Turnbull remarks in his latest book, addressed as usual to the general reader and written in his accessible, amply readable style, "anthropologists are frequently described as romantics because of a tendency to stress the good qualities to be found in other cultures." That was hardly true of his singularly unflattering account of the Ik hunter-gatherers described in his last book, *The Mountain People* (1973). There is no reference to that unpleasant experience in this book. Here Turnbull returns us to the scene of the Mbuti pygmies—his ethnographic first love—extolling their virtues as well as those of Hindu and Tibetan ascetics and of Oxford dons in his critical appraisal of the declining quality of life and of human relationships in the contemporary West (mainly North America).

This moralizing book is a bizarre blend of snippets of exotic ethnography and of personal autobiography. In fact, it is almost entirely autobiographical inasmuch as the author hardly ever cites (except by implication) foreign cultures other than those he has himself experienced at first hand. This is one source of the book's coherence. Another is its division into the cumulative stages of the human life-cycle, which for Turnbull comprises: childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, and old age. The distinction made here between "adolescence" and "youth" is arbitrary and seems rather forced, especially since the examples cited often span or obliterate it.

Following this progression through life's

stages, Turnbull evokes a glowingly warm picture of childhood among the Mbuti pygmies of Zaïre, remarking evocatively: "I really should have been born an Mbuti." Instead, he was the younger of two brothers brought up by a succession of foreign nannies in an upper middle-class family, presided over by an Irish mother. His "gentle and kind" Scottish father, a somewhat "distant" figure, was closer to Turnbull's elder brother. This upbringing, in common with that in other Western cultures, encouraged individualistic competition rather than the idyllic co-operation fostered in Mbuti child-rearing. The same sharp contrasts occur in adolescence, especially in attitudes towards sex. In "other cultures . . . instead of individual curiosity in sexual activity being treated as shameful, it is encouraged to flower into exuberance, and that individual exuberance in sexual potency is then transformed into joy with the realization of the individual's wider social significance as a life-giver, responsible for no less than the continuity of society itself." Such enlightened "natural" attitudes towards blissful sexuality may be those of the Mbuti pygmies, and do, indeed, contrast with the furtive and violent dormitory homosexuality Turnbull encountered at Westminster School, where "sexual experiences were systematically divorced from normal human relationships and set against the concept of sociality." But such a negative view of sex, linked with shame, pollution and women, is by no means rare in the "other cultures" whose beliefs and practices Turnbull eulogizes so indiscriminately.

Leaving school to embark on the period he calls "youth", Turnbull did his war service in the Navy and then went to Oxford, which provided abundant opportunities to become "what every Mbuti has become by adolescence, a fully integrated human being". After Oxford, Turnbull went to India to the Hindu University of Benares, living for two years in an ashram, where at the age of twenty-six he experienced "a second adolescence" learning what he calls the "art of being". He thus discovered that the reason Hindu India did not believe in sexual or non-violence might be the

increasing secularism in modern Indian universities. This seems rather a sweeping conclusion. Adulthood, the next stage, finds Turnbull in Tibet, where Turnbull also sought spiritual enlightenment; he found that brothers had "the atmosphere of a good Scottish country pub". His own initiation into adulthood had already occurred in a grim war incident. He generally, at the individual and cultural level, various instances are recounted of this kind of maturity, described as the "art of doing". The approved emphasis here again is on social concern directed towards the common good, if finally some rather odd examples are offered. Finally, we reach old age, "the art of being, and no concerned with 'wise men', 'saints' (including Turnbull's old mother) or 'sages'". Although his treatment of these roles, in professional anthropological terms, is weak and rather confused, some of his thought-inspired reflections on the inhuman treatment of the elderly in Western industrial cultures seem less banal than those referring to other parts of the life-cycle.

This, I fear, is a very unsatisfactory book, purporting so loudly to examine the various stages of the human life-cycle in cross-cultural perspective. It is in fact a confusing jumble of personal recollection and ethnography, drawing most of its exotic ethnographic evidence from the Mbuti pygmies and aspects of Hindu culture in Benares. Turnbull's selection of such evidence is eclectic and usually completely shallow; cultural virtues are considered entirely without reference to vices.

There is also a cavalier assumption of cultural homogeneity, both in terms of "our" life and values (ie, the author's) and in the hypothetical non-Western "others". Turnbull's romanticism is attractive, but his plausibility. For all their faults, Mbuti and Mead's much-criticized popular studies of primitive child-rearing and adolescence are more non-Western and Western cultures compared very favourably with this rambling meditation on the West. What on earth would a real Mbuti make of it all?

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The star of the Shakespeare show

Michael Wood

ANTHONY BURGESS
Enderby's Dark Lady: or No End to Enderby
 160pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
 0 09 15603 0

F. X. Enderby, man of windy digestion and loose dentures, drinker of thick tea, distinguished poet who leaves the haven of his bathroom only to get into the most unseemly and unsettling scraps, is back; and back, what's more, from the grave or wherever characters go when their authors have decided to bump them off. He first appeared, Anthony Burgess says, "in early 1959": "One day, delirious with sandfly fever, I opened the door of the bathroom in my bungalow and was not altogether surprised to see a middle-aged man seated on the toilet writing what appeared to be poetry." Enderby pursued his disorderly career in *Inside Mr Enderby* and *Enderby Outside*; and in *The Clockwork Testament*, after a stint in New York as a professor and combative chat-show participant, he died of a heart attack, sprendrangled in his sleep. "Nunc dimittis", a cosy voice said, "is the sweetest of canticles." We should have known Burgess couldn't permit Enderby such a tidy departure. Nothing neat about Enderby; not like all those besotted, respectable modern poets imitating the elder statesman: "T. S. Eliot, with his Lloyds Bank nonsense, had started all that, a real treason of clerks." I wonder, incidentally, how many English writers could manage the delicate pun in that sentence, or would use, as Burgess does in *Earthly Powers*, the Boudelore-borrowed phrase "hypocrite teacher" as a throwaway gag.

But Enderby is not really resurrected in Burgess's new book. He is given an alternative story. He didn't go to New York after all, you see, and so didn't die there. That was in

another novel, and besides, the stench is fled. Burgess muddles this elegant exploitation of the freedoms of fiction by mixing up invention with immortality: "Is Don Quixote dead or alive? Is Hamlet? Is Little Nell?" This seems to be the bad conscience of the realist acting up. Enderby, unlike those famous forebears, is alive again in the fiction, and this is possible, not just because he is an imagined character, but because fiction, unlike life, can follow as many forking paths as it wishes.

Enderby's dark lady is a beautiful, swearing black singer from North Carolina, and one of the funniest set-pieces in the novel concerns Enderby's visit to the girl's devout home, a place complete with mammy, hominy grits and the full cast of clichés from *Porgy and Bess*, where Enderby has to pretend to be a guest preacher. Dressed in his shabby suit of clerical grey ("all metaphors in time become reality", Burgess remarks), he speaks to a Baptist congregation and offends everyone – or would have offended everyone if they had not been too kind to take his ramblings seriously. "Today", Enderby says, among other things, "as some of you will know, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in a filthy stable. He was on the eagle of intolerance... and on the side of hatred... Christians have been oppressors throughout the history of the faith... oppressing Jews as well as blacks as well as Muslims... and of course the other way round, although neither Jews nor blacks have had much opportunity to be oppressive, except in Israel and Africa. Still, everything comes to those that wait."

Enderby is in America (Indiana this time) to work on the libretto of a musical about Shakespeare's life, and as the show becomes more and more anachronistic, he worries about possible retaliations from Shakespeare's shade. After all, if Burgess can bring back Enderby, maybe Shakespeare's author can do the same for him. A Mrs Allegremente, an

American medium, claims to have been in touch with the bard in the Happy House ("There is a Happy House", Enderby murmurs, "far far away"), and Enderby is half-afraid she has. He survives various disgraces, including those of appearing as Shakespeare in his own cobbled work and of preferring the arousing image of his dark lady to her fleshly, proffered reality, and returns to his writing life. We also get here, framing his Mid-Western adventures, two rare pieces of Enderby's prose: the story about Shakespeare that got him into the musical mess in the first place, and a story about Shakespeare he writes when it is all over. In the first, Shakespeare rollicks around town with Ben Jonson, who manages to get involved in the Gunpowder Plot and in the Authorized Version of the Bible. Shakespeare too is given a little bit of the translation to work over. He leaves his secret mark, Enderby suggests, on Psalm 46. If you count forty-six words in from the beginning, you will come to the verb *shake*: forty-six words in from the end, not counting the *Selah*, you will find *spear*. I laughed loudest at the impression of King James's reaction to *King Lear*: "Therrre ye see, my lord, and ladies and guid laddies a', what befoleth a king that trusts too much in human nature. It is the tragedy of a king that is not enough on his divine right. He lets gang the rrrule o's rrrreal, tae ither." The second story is an eerie little number about a scholar travelling back in time to Shakespeare's England, only to find otherworldly surprises there, and to have Shakespeare pinch the scholar has brought with him. He never blots a line, Enderby says, because he is simply copying the stuff out.

Enderby is in good form in this book, and just as outrageous as ever. "Everybody had syphilis in those days", he says. "America's gift to Europe. All the world's a tertiary stage, he might have said." He wonders whether halitosis might not be the origin of sodomy – turning

away from bad breath – and decides that God, after all, is "the best of the dramatic poets, though shnpeless and uneconomical. A bit like Charles Dickens". Enderby, in his different avatars, may be Burgess's finest achievement, although not exactly as a character. All Burgess's characters are immediate and vivid, he has the always expected and yet rather rare gift: that of making people come alive on the page as soon as they speak. But Enderby is more than this. He is what Henry James would have called a vessel of consciousness, albeit a shaky and porous one. But then his leakages are what define him and make him precious. He lets out just what he thinks, and he takes in most of what he sees and hears. He allows Burgess's writing to be what it always is at its best: a combination of echo-chamber and bazaar.

A character here "disgrudges" money – begrudges it, I assume, but disemurses. A table is "much-punished", a ham is "full of teeth-hugging fibres". An archbishop has "huge archiepiscopal rings of weariness under his eyes". Enderby's bladder, like a dog, paws at its owner for walks. It was the fashion, some years ago, to speak of language as the hero of certain novels. It is not easy to see what this might mean, but it seems to me that what one enjoys in Burgess is not the structure or any urgent, overriding sense, but the *writing*, a practice which lets language loose on experience, and which remembers how much is already there, clinging to the words, hiding amongst them, to be discovered or reactivated, not concocted. When Enderby as phony preacher meets a real parson, Burgess doesn't miss the little joke, the standard phrase lying almost to hand: "A genuine or right Reverend". A writer, Roland Barthes said, is someone for whom language is a problem. Burgess might reply that a writer is someone for whom language is a privilege and an opportunity, the star of the show.

Which new era?

D. J. Enright

NADINE GORDIMER
Something Out There
 203pp. Cape. £8.50.
 0224 021893

Nadine Gordimer has been writing since 1945 or earlier. In introducing the excellent *Selected Stories* of 1975, she speaks of that part of the stories "truth" which depends on faithfulness to "lost events", the "shifts in social attitudes as evidenced in the characters and situations". Thus, "The humble black servant bemoaning faithfully in 'Ah, Woe is Me' (a very early story) could never have occurred in my writing by the time, several books later, the young black political refugee is awaiting military training in exile... The language itself changes: 'native' becomes 'African' and then 'black'.

To the outsider the process of change will not seem so obvious. South Africa, apart from a softening here, a hardening there, has always been South Africa. This impression may be strengthened by Nadine Gordimer's new collection of stories. With a few exceptions, the people in them get the short shrift accorded to specimens of some known type or other, as if the more searching work on them has been done already, elsewhere in her oeuvre. In *Burger's Daughter* (1979), the young man Conrad is described as "of interest to no one", being neither "the type looking for commitment" nor the equally recognizable type, "a paid spy posing as the type looking for commitment". Even in a story collected in 1956, "Which New Era Would That Be?", one character, a coloured man, swiftly identifies another: "he knew the type well". In this case the white women who "persisted in regarding themselves as your equal".

The opening sentences often forgo the brisk or casual chilliness to follow. "Apparently they noticed each other at the same moment, coming down the steps of the Supreme Court on the third day of the trial." "Pat Haberman has been alone with Harriet since she divorced Harriet's father." "A woman named Beryl Fols recently picked up an old tin chest in a junk

shop." In "Rags and Bones", the old tin chest contains fairly impassioned letters from a man to a woman, both married to other mates, both famous, the man in science, the woman in literature. The distinguished man cannot allow the woman to attend the ceremonies at which he is honoured, the distinguished woman may not dedicate a book to the man... Beryl Fols, determined though faintly uneasy, discovers that the woman's books – her name is on the envelopes – are unobtainable, while the man's identity remains a mystery. The story ends in a let-down, quite deliberately: how nice, especially in the present context, that privacy can be so easily invaded and yet secrecy still preserved!

"Sins of the Third Age" begins: "Each came from a different country and they met in yet another, during a war." Both are treated in taxonomic fashion, as specimens to be efficiently observed, identified, and quickly, indeed somewhat impatiently, put aside. If "overheated" is a fault, "underheated" is not necessarily a strength. The prose – not too bothered about elegance or ready comprehensibility – resembles the staple of scientific reporting: "a childhood that one has not grown out of but been exploded from in the cross-fire of armies explodes, at the same time, the theory of childhood as the basis to which the adult personality always refers itself". The tale reads like an experiment which has failed to

Background Music

Beelooty colonels explain to the Lounge Bar how, in the 'Lat Show', they had a marvellous time, and how we need a new war.

If we are going to get this Great Country back on its feet, sir (also all beards should be shaved; also the Dole should be stopped).

Life still goes on and it isn't the end of the world (the child-soothing platitudes weaken now Cruise proves them potentially false).

Lieder's no art against these sorry times (anguished Paramour likens mountainy crags and a crow to the flint heart of his prey).

PETER READING

yield any results whatsoever.

In "At the Rendezvous of Victory", Sielclair "General Giant" Zwedzi is a Coriolanus-like freedom fighter, "talkative, honest, indiscreet and emotional". When a black government replaces the white one, he is thought too powerful a reminder of the divided past and shuffled off to the Ministry of Sport and Recreation. He lives up to his portfolio by taking the energetically to drink and women. The story can be seen as an ironic footnote to "Not for Publication", the title-story of a collection published in 1965 – the irony underlined by the co-presence of a white former Chief of Staff, kept on as chief military adviser to the new régime – or as an alternative, and equally authentic, scenario. New situations, old types.

"I am famous, too: You made me famous as the father who frightened his child once and for all: for life. Thank you very much." The odd man out, here, is the riposte, "Letter from His Father", a rather protracted and uncertainly parodic version of the Jewish mother joke transposed to the other parent. "Living with that Eastern Jewess, and in sin... To desecrate your parents' grave as well as their bed, aren't you ashamed?" Devotees of Franz Kafka will hate it – even the father of Philip Roth's Zuckerman was granted no such liberties – though without much call, for (as he admits) Hermann Kafka is the lesser writer.

Although there is nothing among these stor-

ies to compare with such earlier pieces as "The Smell of Death and Flowers" or "Livingstone's Companions", the prize in this collection is the novella which provides the title. Two blacks, preparing to blow up a power station, are sheltered in the guise of "farm boys" by a liberal white couple, while – also "out there" – an escaped baboon terrorizes the white districts, killing dogs and cats and stealing venison. The baboon gets the worst of both worlds: the Right are angry because expensive security measures fail to exclude savage animals from high-class suburbs, and the Left object to the concern shown for a homeless animal when hundreds of thousands of blacks are without adequate housing. The prose here is more confident, and richer:

At first they could not come out at all into this pig's Colossus eye, a fly's a million times feasted; that revealed the minutely-striated smoothness of the tube of grass, the combination of colours that made up a flake of verdigris on a stone, the bronze collar on the carapace of a beetle working through a cake of cow-dung.

The cave near the power station in which the two blacks (firmly individuated, by the way, with limpet mines and grenades, make their last camp reaches back, via a liquor bottle dating from Kruger's time, to the discovery of metals and the first making of tools, fear-terrible ones: The claustrophobia of contemporary politics, of typical situations and typical behaviour, yields briefly, as we are swept back over centuries and millennia to our common simian ancestry: the "something out there" is also – the past, human and pre-human, illogical though it may be, we experience something of the relief and reassurance afforded by Hardy's poem, "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'".

"My time and place have been tyndalised-century Africa." We must often have envied South African writers for having such strong subject-matter at their disposal. Strong it will be, but less and less varied as the years go by. Too much of anything can make the heart stone; and then, as Yeats meditated in time of civil war, "More substance in our emblems than in our love". Nadine Gordimer survives as a writer of distinction by virtue less of her themes than of her distinction as a writer.

Extremely virile satirists

J. N. Adams

AMY RICHLIN
The Garden at Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor
 289pp. Yale University Press. £25.
 0300 029020

Amy Richlin here aims to analyse the expression of sexual aggression and humour in various genres of Latin literature (notably epigram, satire and oratory) and in graffiti. Comedy, despite its relevance, is omitted. The book contains a section on the theory of humour, in which it is suggested that the Freudian analysis of jokes explains much in Latin satire.

The ithyphallic god Priapus, whose statue stood in gardens, is treated as a "model" for the satirist (and humorist). "The figure of Priapus that stands at the center of the garden is an exact parallel for the figure of the satirist" (my italics). Just as Priapus threatens to rape those who intrude upon his territory, so the satirist supposedly dominates a "special area" and threatens as Priapus does. Both Priapus and the satirist have special scorn for the public, male or female. The "Priapic stance" of the satirist (or humorist) is said to be adopted even when he is dealing with non-sexual subjects. Thus "the literary Priapus [ie, Catullus] plumps his book". Not every reader will be convinced that Catullus is "Priapic" at the opening of his dedicatory poem. In the world of this book it is not only individuals who are at risk of being raped. Juvenal "in effect rapes Rome with Naevolus as his agent", and Catullus rapes epic poetry at 115.8.

Richlin's "model" is not worked out fully, nor could it be. It would take a vivid imagination to see its relevance to a good deal of non-sexual satire (such as Juvenal's poem on the horrors of city life), and it does nothing to illuminate sexual satire itself. It is of course true that conventional Roman male sexual attitudes (notably contempt for passive homosexuals) are embodied in (male) satire and humour, just as they are attributed to Priapus. That does not mean that the sexual humorist or satirist always presents himself or can be seen as a "strong male of extreme virility". Sexual invective in Latin, as Richlin herself shows, is often directed not at patrics but at those who resemble Priapus.

At one point, Richlin looks forward to a "new world", in which a new mode of humour may be founded, perhaps by *neulac* (old women). She also stresses that the Romans regarded the female genitalia as disgusting. On p26 the female genitalia are "almost exclusively" disgusting; whereas later it is stated that Latin literature describes female genitalia "only in terms of extreme loathing". There is a degree of exaggeration here, which leads to the assertion that Catullus "never mentions either fellatio or female genitalia without disgust". In fact there may be only one reference to the genitalia of women to the whole of Catullus, and that is accompanied by no expression of disgust. It is true that the genitalia of women (usually old women) are sometimes described as disgusting by a few writers. But it is not relevant to the Roman ideal of beauty that an elegist such as Ovid seems to leave a "black space in the middle of the woman". One would not expect to find detailed praise of the vagina in a genre as precious and allusive as elegy, which tends equally to leave a blank space in the middle of men. As a contrast to the attitudes expressed by Martial and a few others, one thinks of Apuleius' lavish description of Phots' beauty in *Metamorphoses* 2; her *fontinal* figures as a desirable attribute. Richlin is too willing to base generalizations on an inadequate sample of evidence.

Philological argument and problems of interpretation are avoided. This is nowhere clearer than in the chapter on the early satirist Lucilius, who survives only in fragments. Without discussion Richlin constantly adopts a glib (sometimes sexual) interpretation of fragments of which the text or meaning is problematical. Frg 304, for example (*am poto copoum*), is translated "when I burst with my hard-on", with no hint either that the text is conjectured or that *poto* could not be an ablativus. Few would accept this text: The attribution to *hilarulus* ("one who deals in or eats

emmer groats") of a homosexual significance is quite grotesque. It would even seem that the obscure *pediculus* has been conflated with *pedulum* ("fart"), to judge by 252 n 11 "perhaps = flatulence brought on by indulgence in anal penetration". This piece of semantics is not explained. The misinterpretation of frg 278 on pages 166 and 168 is so seriously at variance with the one item of evidence bearing on the meaning of the line that the author ought to have felt obliged to offer at least some defence of her view. She might have saved herself from some of these absurdities and others by consulting commentaries and standard dictionaries such as the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, a work which she appears not to have used.

The footnotes to the chapter on Catullus give generous space to some of the sillier interpretations that have been inflicted on the poet. Richlin is also able to offer some curiosities of her own. Poem 116 is now seen to contain a "sexual / oral / verbal threat". The missiles (*tele*) which Gellius is said to throw (*ulture*) at Catullus' head represent not merely verbal abuse, but his penis, as if it were detachable. The master of Veranius and Fabullus in poem 28 not only "stuffs" them, but is said to do it with a penis specified as circumcised (*nerpa*), as if Catullus wished to suggest that the consul L. Piso resembled a Jew. Richlin is clearly

unaware of the meaning of *nerpa*, which was not a specialized term for a circumcised penis, and which certainly does not have that sense in Catullus 28. Its sense she might have discovered if she had made use of the standard commentary of Kroll.

The shaky grasp of linguistic issues seen here is often apparent. This is not the place to list the mistranslations that the book contains, or the generalizations about Latin usage that are based on no systematic examination of the evidence. The author's reliability in this area may be deduced from p 132, where it is remarked that Martial "studiously" avoids *cunnilinctio* and another word in 2.28. That is not surprising, since *cunnilinctio* did not exist in ancient Rome, whatever its currency in American English. On the other hand Richlin seems slightly puzzled that Shackleton Bailey "assumes a verb, *uicio*". The verb is not assumed to have existed; it is attested, as Richlin might have known if she had read any graffiti other than those in Diehl's selection of 1930. As an unsatisfactory generalization I single out the remark that the simplicity of structure of the *Priapea* (a corpus of poems which has an important place in the book), and their lack of syntactical ornamentation "would seem to place the collection early". The degree of "syntactical ornamentation", whatever that might

be, is not a workable criterion for the dating of Latin poetry. At the very least the doctrine requires elucidation. There are too many unexplained assertions in the book; even when a textual change is suggested (244n5), its point is not explained. On the other hand Richlin is ready to drag in Donald Duck, Burt Reynolds (often "Priapic"), Woody Allen, Mick Jagger and other pretentious analogies. The book sometimes gives the impression of being out of control.

The most comprehensive parts of the book are the sections on sexual themes and erotic allusions presented in Greek epigram and Martial, and on the sexual invective that played a part in Roman politics. Richlin would not, however, have found an allusion to Pisu's pederasty at Cicero, *in Pisone* 65, if she had taken the trouble to look at the standard commentary on the speech. Other sections are far less satisfactory. As the book advances Richlin tends to lose sight of her main themes and to summarize general features of various writers (eg, Seneca, Petronius). Before publication she would have been well advised to devote closer attention to comedy, Lucilius, Varro's *Moenipian Satires* (not mentioned), Catullus, Persius, and above all graffiti, which are cited from an out-of-date selection, with at least one misquotation and misquoting comment.

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0485 150174

In his recollections of sixty years of observation and participation in the life of Japan, G. C. Allen provides a sympathetically penetrating view of that remarkable and responsive country. As economist and economic historian, Allen, who died before this memoir could appear, took Japan as a leading theme in both his scholarly and personal life, so much so that the Japanese regarded him as a living commitment to their country, a man who, in deep affection, devoted much of his life to understanding it and interpreting it, not least to themselves.

Allen first went to Japan in 1922 to prepare youths in the Koto Shingyo Gakko (Commercial High School) of Nagoya to understand and take a lead in the Japanese business world, then only in the early stages of its great acceleration. He describes the country as he found it shortly after the First World War, using what must have been a carefully kept diary which gives freshness to his recall. Then there is the Japan of his second stay in 1936, with industrialization rapidly extending, and the country at the same time being taken over by the military. Finally, we see Japan in almost total prostration after the Second World War, and at intervals up to the near-present. These later visits are not presented chronologically, but are arranged as a set of essays around leading themes concerned with Japanese life and its relations with the West.

Allen is understandably nostalgic for the world he discovered in his young manhood, and which the Japanese have lost, as an inadvertent trade-off in their striving for industrial achievement. He saw and sensed elements of the medieval and even the ancient worlds still thriving alongside the crass intrusion of new technology. Myriad tiny open-fronted workshops, the click of the abacus and an ancient peasant agriculture, together with village festivals, were only just beginning to yield to graceless concrete factories. All of this inspired in him a recollection of the European past, now being refracted and compacted in Japan's own distinctive way. He found that Britain was still the dominant power in the Far East, and indeed in the world, and that the Japanese deeply respected her as such, success for them being proof of quality. Her decline from this high estate to that of the present (concerning which the Japanese tradition of politeness does not permit them to be explicit, except in the kind of intimacy that a man like Allen could enjoy) was the obverse of Japanese success. And yet Allen was fully aware that the Japanese have never entirely lost their doubts about the moral worth of the West, and its technology-based industry, and that voices are now being raised asking whether the time is coming when it will be necessary to rediscover the soul of Japan. He describes how his students in the 1920s, when for the purpose of theatricals they abandoned their drab blue uniforms for the dress and demeanour of the heroes of the past, assumed such characters with perfect naturalness and grace. Moreover, the disregard for social welfare which helped to create the economic miracle is becoming increasingly unacceptable. Yet Allen flatly rejects the argument that Japan's industrialization has been bought at too high a cost.

Unlike Allen, earlier British writers on Japan failed to draw analogies between that country and the past of Europe, for example in the matter of the divinity of emperors. Allen believes that had they done so, much misunderstanding might have been avoided and some sense of a shared historical experience been generated. The British had saddled themselves with a way of thinking that was not only inappropriate to the challenge of a science-based technology, but which, because of its

Eurocentricity, could not assist them to probe beneath the exotic surface of Japan to discover what the two countries had in common.

As an economist, Allen gave much thought to the comparative performance of Japanese and British industry. By the 1930s, whereas Britain was producing only a few hundred graduates a year in business education, Japan was turning out some three thousand, and in his studies of British and Japanese business in the late 1930s Allen found that the British manager typically had no idea of the nature of scientific inquiry, much less any notion that his actions were a contribution to the economy and society that might be amenable to study or might contain something of interest to anyone outside the firm. But his Japanese counterpart understood the nature of data and of modes of reasoning about the business system. Though great efforts have recently been made in Britain to close this gap, Allen suggests that the Japanese are still far ahead.

But the generation which built up British banking in the Far East from the 1860s onwards were far from duffers. Perhaps this was because, like Sir Charles Addis, they were recruited young, often having earned their membership of the Institute of Bankers of Scotland

before leaving for the Orient. The achievement of such men, who founded and developed Jardine Matheson and Company (1833) and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (1864), was indeed remarkable, though not entirely free from criticism.

Jardine Matheson, with its splendid but somewhat tightly controlled archive in Cambridge University Library, has not so far published a serious study of its activities, though a volume by Lord Blake is said to be in preparation. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank has gone about matters differently and has commissioned an American, Frank H. H. King, Professor of Economic History in the University of Hong Kong, to produce a comprehensive and analytical study of the firm based on an archive which rivals that of Jardines. The first major product of his efforts is *Eastern Banking*, a collection of papers first presented at a conference in 1981. They are offered as interim monographs, shafts sunk at particular points in the vast range of material.

The focal point of the development of Eastern banking by the British (the leading European participants) was China rather than Japan. This is partly because China was "opened up" earlier than Japan (in the 1840s),

but also because of the economic drawing-power of the new city of Hong Kong and the hectic growth of the international settlement in Shanghai. Moreover the Chinese, unlike the Japanese, were unable quickly to minimize the European intrusion. Whereas banking in England and Scotland had traditionally been independent of the state (by preference of both bankers and politicians), when it came to the new opportunities unfolding in China the old stand-off between British governments and banking was no longer appropriate.

By the 1860s China had already been in decline for two generations, and the state was largely impotent, so that bank loans had far-reaching implications; not only did they need British government guarantees but they were also backed by British control of Chinese customs revenues. The Treasury had to adjudicate between bankers, awarding what were in effect quasi-monopolies, and the HSBC was one of the most favoured of the banks. British bankers, with this access to an important part of the Chinese public purse, were in a splendid position, and at the same time Eastern banking became highly political.

Professor King's essayists, however, do not provide an easily assimilable conspectus of Eastern banking. They provide much dense and recondite information but little by way of an overview. Many different parts of the world are treated in terms of the HSBC's contact with them, including Malaysia, the Netherlands, India, Ceylon, Thailand, the Philippines, as well as Europe (Hamburg and Lyon); there are essays on bank architecture, banknote design and business organization (the *compradores*). But there is very little on the connection between the Bank's major activities and the process of economic growth in the Far East, on the scale and direction of lending, or on profitability. Nor is there any real attempt to draw up a social and economic balance-sheet reflecting the positive and negative impact of the Bank.

The evolving pattern of Britain's banking and commercial intrusion into the East can perhaps be seen in terms of a continuum of business activity and response, reaching from India under the East India Company through China to Japan, spheres of influence made possible by the mixture of acquiescence and support provided by the British Government. But British banks never penetrated Japan, which never really lost control of its banking (or its industry); it frustrated European expansion by a determination to minimize foreign trade until Lord Elgin's Unequal Treaties of 1858 had been revoked.



An advertising hoarding for Japanese Mitsubishi vehicles, on Nanjing Road in Shanghai, which is known as China's "bustle boulevard", advertising, once denounced as an exploitative tool of bourgeois capitalism, is now relied on by Chinese state corporations for selling anything from cosmetics to trucks. This illustration is taken from Liu Heng Shing's book of photographs from 1976 and 1981, *China After Mao: "Seek Truth From Facts"* (176, with 228 plates, Penguin, £5.50, 0 14 006761 2).

Expansion in the West

Bruce Lenman

NORIOTAMAKI
The Life Cycle of the Union Bank of Scotland
1830-1954
242pp. Aberdeen University Press. £19.50.
008 0303595

Most people in Britain have a vague notion that there is a separate Scottish banking system. Its distinguishing features are banks with "Scotland" in their name, and odd banknotes. But as the title of this book reminds us, that system is now material for the pathologist. Scotland does not have its own financial system. Of the three clearing banks which are the most important financial institutions in North Britain, the Clydesdale is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Midland Bank; 35 per cent of the shares of the Bank of Scotland are held by Barclays Bank; and the Royal Bank of Scotland is, together with Williams and Glyn's, one of the two principal participants in a banking group in which Lloyds Bank holds 16 per cent of the shares. These three names are all that is left of a once elaborate structure. Their attachment to their note issue is, incidentally, entirely functional: it means that they do not have to tie up 5 per cent of their assets in a form that earns no interest—Bank of England notes.

Public banking in Scotland (excluding merchant banks, which do not accept deposits, transmit money, or issue personal loans) was until recently a moribund field. The Union

Bank, as this study shows, was originally set up by Glasgow business interests anxious to challenge the ascendancy of the conservative Edinburgh banking establishment. The West of Scotland was in 1830 on the verge of an era of spectacular expansion based on heavy industry, and its business class wanted financial institutions which understood their problems and which could be manipulated to their advantage. Directors were usually at the head of the queue seeking preferential treatment in the matter of credits.

The Union Bank grew rapidly in the mid-nineteenth century, mainly by amalgamation with older Glasgow banks such as the Thistle and Ship Banks, but also by what was to prove a very important alliance with the prestigious Edinburgh firm of Sir William Forbes and Company. Like other Scottish banks which survived into the 1930s the Union Bank had its history written. R. S. Rait's book was that historian's last before a combination of circumstances such as the principalship of Glasgow University (Sir Donald MacAlister was Chancellor, and Compton Mackenzie Lord Rector) conspired to terminate his writing and probably shorten his life. What was a modern scholar, and a Japanese one at that, add? The answer seems to be: more than one might think, and certainly enough to justify the Glasgow-Tokyo connection so carefully fostered by Sydney Checkland, the inspiration behind the thesis which lies behind this book.

Rait went on to armageddon after his illness, and the book is a testament to his

narrative necessarily ended in 1930. Note Tamaki can survey the whole life-cycle of the firm, asking more modern questions than Rait's still indispensable work. What emerges is that there was a fundamental shift in the whole style of the bank in the later nineteenth century. Glasgow banking never really recovered from the two traumatic failures of the era. The Western Bank went to the wall in 1857, and the City of Glasgow Bank failed in 1878 in the horrendous fashion chronicled in Guy McCrone's novel *Wax Fruit*. The Union Bank had expanded by taking over the Aberdeen Bank and the Perth Bank. By channeling funds from capital-surplus areas like these into the capital-hungry west of Scotland it had become the second biggest Scots bank. However, after 1862 under the general management of Charles Gairdner it pursued a hyper-conservative path which led to stagnation and relative decline. Gairdner combined an extraordinary respectability with some loner dealing in Astor stock, while director, Sir Charles Tennant, here shown as a rascally stock sharper, needed the money to launch his daughter in the London social scene.

By 1950 the Union Bank could neither compete with the consolidated English "Big Five" for vital London business nor provide the loans required by new giant corporations. It sank into the embrace of the Bank of Scotland, as that latter was later to embrace Barclays. Anyone who thinks Scots have a natural genius for banking will emerge wiser from this interesting book.

Poet in uniform

Vernon Scannell

ROY FULLER
Hame and Dry: Memoirs III
165pp. London Magazine Editions. £8.95.
0 904388 47 6

Roy Fuller's third and concluding volume of his memoirs (following *Souvenirs* and *Vamp Till Ready*) begins with his being posted, in April 1942, as a non-commissioned radar technician in the Fleet Air Arm, to East Africa where he served in and around Kenya, gained promotion to petty officer and was returned to England to be exalted to the rank of sub-lieutenant after seven months of overseas service. He saw no action and seems on the whole to have had a pretty cushy war. Yet this account of one man's experience of a war that was not, in any spectacular sense, an eventful one is continuously absorbing, often funny, and moving.

In his wartime poetry Fuller captured probably better than anyone — with the possible exception of Henry Reed in *Lessons of the War* — the leaden tedium, the boredom, hopelessness

and aching sense of deprivation that was so much a part of the experience of the reluctant warrior in the conflict against Fascism. In *Hame and Dry* the account of the voyage aboard a crowded troopship, as experienced by an educated man of thirty among the slobs and yobs of the conscript fighting forces, is vividly presented. The fidelity to both subjective response and external detail, to the particular and the general, achieves a powerful sense of what it was really like. At this stage in his intellectual and moral development Fuller was a committed Marxist and through this book we trace his gradual ideological disillusionment as he is confronted by what seems to be evidence that mankind is irredeemably brutish, greedy and selfish, and his belief "in human goodness; goodness frustrated only by a society that denied adequate love and power to its most numerous class" is painfully undermined. It is here that the note of melancholy is sounded in a narrative which is, in the main, robustly cheerful.

Fuller's prose style is strange indeed: he produces a mixture of the mundane, the lower-deck vernacular and exclamatory archaic that, once

ear and eye have accustomed themselves, is surprisingly enjoyable. He uses expressions like "little did I rock that forty years on"; "those bombarded peoples of yore"; even when he employs the argot of the matelot or swaddin, as in "crashing one's swede" the coarse metaphor sorts oddly with the genteel "one's". These verbal uneasinesses are found so frequently that I wonder if their presence is not an unconscious externalization of the lack of social confidence and identity which seems to have been a serious problem to the young poet.

Hame and Dry also affords some insights into the character and mind of a true poet who tends to underrate much of his own verse written at that time. In those poems of the early 1940s the strict traditional forms which Fuller employed permitted a frankness of statement and facilitated an eloquence which still convinces, too, and it shows us finally the personality of a man of some emotional reticence broad but watchful sympathies, a sharp intelligence and a great deal more human warmth than might have been promised from the earlier pages of his memoirs.

Behind the shop

John Burnett

WINIFRED BEECHER
The Rich Mrs Robinson
145pp. Oxford University Press. £6.95.
0192117831

Autobiographies of "ordinary" people (many of whom turn out to be not at all ordinary) have become something of a publishing boom in the past decade or so. While we have long been exposed to the memoirs of statesmen and politicians and, more recently, to the ghostly recollections of actors and actresses, sportspeople and other entertainers, the "ungreat" have been unduly reticent about telling their own life stories. Suddenly, it seems, all has changed. Anonymous lives have become of interest, both to the general reader who sees his own experiences mirrored and articulated, perhaps nostalgically, in the lives of others, and, more particularly, to students of social history who find in autobiography a major new source of direct evidence about life in past times. Until a few years ago historians knew of no more working-class autobiographies than could be counted on the fingers of four hands: research has now revealed a vast repository of such works, published and unpublished, at least a thousand of which come from the nineteenth century alone.

The content, length, style and interest of such accounts vary greatly, as do the reasons why people commit their lives to paper. Some believe that they have an important message for posterity, moral, religious or political; some wish to leave a record for later generations of their family of a life very different — and, usually, much harder — than that which their grandchildren now enjoy; others merely like to write, and write about the one thing we all think we know — ourselves. Most autobiographies are composed in later life, reviewing and reflecting on experiences from a perspective which attempts to give meaning and identity to an ordinary existence.

The Rich Mrs Robinson is broadly of this last type, but it stands well out from the crowd. The first work of a writer in her seventy-third year, this is a remarkably stylish, perceptive and witty account of Winifred Beecher's childhood in the Vale of Aylesbury during and after the First World War, of her eccentric parents and her mother's precarious little draper's shop which somehow survived the poor customers who could only pay their bills in potatoes, and the down-on-his-luck traveller who landed her with a large consignment of veils long after they had gone out of fashion. From the opening sentence, reminiscent of *Pride and Prejudice* — "It is a very clever person who knows when he may feel himself to be rich" — we can guess that we are in for a treat, and we are not disappointed.

This was a poor family, strict, respectable, church-going. Winifred as a girl a bit priggish,

finding the world, like other intelligent and imaginative children, "mysterious, fiercely exciting, frightening and beautiful". No wonder. Her father returned from five years of war with a ruby from the Ural Mountains, a piece of ivory from a mammoth's tusk, some toe-rings, bangles encrusted with tiny mirrors and a pair of felt boots, but no job: the shop behind which they lived in Princes Risborough had a lavatory at the end of a dark passage, strangers to which were brightly warned by her mother, "We always knock at the door before we go in" to allow time for the rats to scuttle away. Winifred and her sister were frequently in despair at the over-generosity of their mother to customers and their father's inept efforts at the local furniture factory, where his chairs refused to stand up straight. Eventually he invented a moderately successful chair-bed, which sold in some quantity to London doss-houses, and the draper's shop expanded as

middle-class residents began to move into the district in the 1930s. Needless to say, the Robinsons never became rich in worldly wealth. Winifred did not sit the scholarship for the grammar school, "the headmaster having told me that my parents did not want me to take the examination": at fourteen she too started at the chair factory, teaching herself to type letters in an unheated wooden hut which served as the office.

There the story ends, except for a short epilogue on her parents' last years, and we are left wondering what happened to Winifred, and asking for more. This is, of its kind, an immaculate book. It does not have the rumbustious humour of the other Winifred (Foley's *A Child in the Forest*), and it is not a psychic reconstruction of childhood as in Kathleen Woodward's *Jipping Street*, though it has some of both elements, but for observation, wit and style it takes some beating.

Recovery from within

Bruce Hephurn

NORMAN COUSINS
The Healing Heart
302pp. Norton. £13.95.
0 393018164

The Healing Heart is one man's account of his coronary thrombosis. Norman Cousins was a successful editor of the *Saturday Review* who, after his recovery from a disabling disease in 1964, wrote a book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, in which he suggested that "love, laughter, hope, faith, and the will to live" should play as large a part in medical treatment as modern technology. He concluded that the brain is, among other things, a gland whose secretions, stimulated by love, laughter, etc., are conducive to recovery. So persuasively did he argue that in 1978 he became Professor of Medical Humanities at UCLA, where he expected that all the doctors, nurses and nuns would do their duty by a joke. In 1978 his own cheerfulness was put to the test when he sustained his heart attack.

Cousins began as he meant to go on. On his admission to hospital he sat up on his stretcher, grinned and waved to the assembled medical staff, coughed up blood and told them that they were looking at the darnedest healing machine that had ever been wheeled into the hospital. Although within minutes he had refused the first remedy proffered, on the grounds that his brain was capable of manufacturing it, it was during his convalescence that battle with his physicians was joined in earnest. They urged him to allow them to estimate the patency of his coronary arteries with a view to recommending surgery. He, believing that his heart could create its own bypass, demurred and spent the next year supervising his own recovery. On the jogging track he swapped

ideas on nutrition and life-styles with his fellow-invalids. After games of tennis he had his blood pressure measured by his opponents. Seeking his second wind on the treadmill — on which one of his friends had died — he sustained himself with a recording of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor played by his old friend Albert Schweitzer. On the first anniversary of his attack he stimulated his secretions at a party where, disguised as an English physician, he not only embraced but patted all the women, causing an ex-nun to jump three feet backwards.

Although *The Healing Heart* is often jarring to the sensibilities of those old-world doctors and patients who still agree with the late Robert Hutchison that the secret of health is to ignore it, one cannot withhold one's admiration from someone who so enthusiastically practises what he preaches: that the proper study of sick members of mankind is themselves, and that every patient should be his own physician. If, however, Cousins is to be awarded the Nobel Prize, for which he has been nominated by the Vatican, the Red Cross and the Mayor of Hiroshima, it should not perhaps be for his crusade against man's propensity to self-destruct, but for his advocacy of the role of the primary physician as a therapeutic weapon. We really cannot be reminded too often of the need for one patient to be treated over a long period of time by one benevolent doctor, who is familiar with his home circumstances.

The Healing Heart should find its place on our bookshelves between Richard Selzer's *Mortal Lessons* and Larry Dossey's *Space, Time and Medicine*. Together they will provide a brisk corrective to many of the fashionable ideas about the role of the doctors and the doctoring in the Land of the Psa.

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Behind the lines

Robert Hewison

By the time this is published the victims of the Arts Council's new development strategy will know the worst. In order to be able to put fresh blood into its activities, especially in the regions, the Arts Council has decided to cut throats elsewhere.

There has been quite enough speculation in the past few weeks for accurate predictions to be made, and there is no point in speculating further here. But readers may be interested to know more about the activities and interests of the man specially hired by the Arts Council as Arts Development Strategy Adviser. (Somehow, making cuts always involves taking on more staff.) Certainly, many of the people who have been closely involved in the recent "consultations" would like to know more.

Dr Robert Stewart is forty-three, and according to the official Arts Council literature he has been a "free-lance historian" since 1972. He was educated at the universities of Toronto and Oxford, where he wrote a doctoral thesis at Christ Church under Lord Binkley, and he has lectured in history at Saskatchewan and Westfield College, London. He is known to be a close friend of the Arts Council's Deputy Secretary-General Richard Pulford, and he was officially hired to act as a *rapporteur* who would assist Pulford in drafting reports for the Council of the deliberations of its advisory panels.

The bland civil service role of *rapporteur* does not do justice to Dr Stewart's influence on recent events. Because he has attended every meeting of every panel, he has more knowledge than anyone else of the strengths and weaknesses of the panels and their clients. The whole Development Strategy project has reversed the pattern of policy-making in the Arts Council. It is clear that a small inner cabinet around the new Chairman, Sir William Rees-Mogg, has decided that changes will be made, and the panels, instead of suggesting policy to the Council, have found themselves in the position of having to defend themselves as well as their clients. It is evident that Dr Stewart has been as much an enforcer as a *rapporteur*.

This is demonstrated by the minutes of the meetings of the Literature Panel. (With the panel's imminent demise, I feel almost nostalgic about this last leak.) The minutes of the meeting on January 6, for example, include the following:

Dr Robert Stewart intervened at this point to say that he had been surprised to hear Panel members suggest that one of the functions of the Council should be to provide security and eliminate risks for artists. It was precisely not the function of the Council to cushion artists against risks. The Chairman (Margherita Laski) agreed.

Dr Stewart's hostility towards grants for writers cannot, however, be complete, for in his time he has himself received grants from the Canada Council, the British Academy and the Twenty-Seven Foundation.

Those who detect a political flavour in the Arts Council's recent appointments and decisions will draw little comfort from the titles of Dr Stewart's publications, *The Politics of Protection* (1971) and *The Foundation of the Conservative Party, 1830-1867* (1978). But we learn most about Dr Stewart's philosophy from an article he contributed to the *Canadian Journal of History* for September 1971, "Understanding English Conservatism, with apologies to Joyce Cary". Traditionally Cary has been thought of as a liberal, but Stewart argues that his novels also show an understanding of the conservative position. "What all life is viewed as art, it is possible to reach a satisfactory appreciation of the conservative."

As opposed to "radicals" who are theoreticians and reductionists, to Dr Stewart conservatives are pragmatists: "conservatism looks to the past for its inspiration, not to theory about the future". Conservatives, like artists, create order out of chaos by creating symbols which give expression to intuitions, "the Church, the land, the constitution and the family circle". But once such satisfactory symbols for our desires are created, their very existence almost completely blocks the chance of fresh discovery. Thus, "even when he knows the world of his ordering is passing, the conservative has no choice but to stick by it, and in the end pass with it."

Such a conclusion would not at first glance accord with the Arts Council's policy of change. But it is to be noticed that radical clients like the Royal Court are more at risk than opera. Sir William Rees-Mogg's taste is for the literature of the past, not the present. And although Dr Stewart's argument suggests that once established, cultural forms may block fresh development, the Council's strategy appears to be to preserve such forms against radical challenge, and thus prevent their passing away. Those clients who have been placed under sentence of death by the Arts Council's recent deliberations will appreciate the irony of Dr Stewart's quotation from Tennyson: That man's the true Conservative Who lops the mouldier'd branch away.

Fabers are typically congratulating themselves with the word "inspirational" to describe their decision to commission a book published this week, which is not only essential reading for anyone interested in the background to the Arts Council's current upheavals, but also contributes to the debate. Bryan Appleyard's *The Culture Club: Crisis in the Arts* (128pp. £9.95 hardback. 0 571 13385 1, but better value in paperback at £2.95. 0 571 13279 0) is in the tradition of rumbustious pamphleteering which I thought had gone out of fashion.

Appleyard is a journalist, and his experience first as a financial writer, and now Deputy Arts Editor of *The Times*, has placed him in a good position to annoy the "soft-left" mandarins of the artistic-administrative establishment, "the Culture Club, with its select and secretive committee and its shifting body of members, which has expropriated the idea of art and is now at a loss to know what to do with it". Briefly, his argument is that the post-war arts industry is based on the assumption that art is a Good Thing, and people should have more of it. This has been the accepted ideology ever since the illusory economic expansion of the 1960s, though "in fact, the goals set were unattainable at the levels of funding then current and completely out of the question once growth had stopped".

The cessation of growth has clearly provoked the current blood-letting by the Arts Council. Appleyard mercilessly exposes the demoralization of representative members of the Culture Club, Lord Goodman, Sir Peter Hall, Sir Claus Moser, Melvyn Bragg, as they try to defend "the welfare art view" on moral or even economic grounds. He evidently admires the pragmatic Mr Henry Wrong, administrator of the Barbican Arts Centre, nineteen years and £200 million in the making. "Not one of [the Barbican's] amenities is necessary. They arose out of a liberal itch to do something: in the event, to build an arts centre in the wrong place."

Appleyard believes that at the root of the crisis lies a crisis in the definition of art itself. He points out that while the welfare view of art involves a greater and greater dissemination of the arts, art, in the shape of modernism, has turned in upon itself, to concern itself not with social relevance, but almost exclusively with form. The "new art", by which he means rock music and design, have successfully invaded the territory of the fine arts, but they too have become entangled in "the tendency of post-war Britain to throw the same social, political and moral nets over cash as it does over art".

Yet the same problem of definition lies at the root of Appleyard's book. His polemic depends on the stealth with which he approaches his own meaning of the word "art" (used over against the administrative term "arts") but never quite gets there. He preliminarily explains that his book "is written in the belief that private, individual delight and a profound usefulness are fundamental to the nature of all art", but his comments in the course of his argument appear to reject the products both of modernism and of the more recent return to naturalism. In his conclusion he emphasizes the "difference" of art from everything else, and the need to disentangle it from the moral or economic arguments for enjoying it. In the end, he suggests that this may only be achieved by draining art of all meaning.

In his insistence on the private, individual nature of the artistic experience, Appleyard

discloses a system of values that places him more on the side of the new Right than of the soft Left, and it is this that inspires his cheerful iconoclasm. Yet the experiences he celebrates depend on the existence of an arts industry of some kind, and on one which functions best as a mixed economy of commercialism and subsidy. Someone from the Culture Club will have to run it. And the paradox remains: Appleyard also believes that art is a Good Thing, otherwise he would not have written such a provocative book.

After spending so much time in the blood-stained corridors of power, it is a relief to turn to the calmer world of living corpses, giant orcs, evil goblins, minotaurs and other monsters of fantasy fiction. A whole subculture has grown up around role-playing adventure games that have simultaneously developed a literary genre, the solo-adventure game book, and a science-fiction existence as computer programmes. It even has rival "literary" magazines, *White Dwarf* and *Imagine*.

The genre has its origins in a fiendishly complex board game, "Dungeons and Dragons", invented some ten years ago by an American postman, Gary Gygax. Two British addicts of such games, Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, who founded Games Workshop Ltd, created a simplified version in book form, by which a solo player, having read the rules, sets out on a quest in which he is constantly presented with options as to where to "go" (that is, read) next.

Following the choice of options, and the resolution of the encounters with monsters and magic along the way, the reader/player arrives at his goal, or dies in its pursuit. The form has developed in parallel with the evolution of computer games, which offer the same combinations of choice and combat. Appropriately, one of the most successful of these is "The Hobbit", where computer-graphic animations of Tolkien's characters follow their own game quest. Both multi-option book and computer programme are "written" on the basis of a flow chart, and it was a logical step for Jackson and Livingstone to present their adventures in book and computer software form. Thus *The Work of Fire-Top Mountain*, 1982 (Puffin. 0 1403 1538 1) can be found in bookshops at £1.50 and computer shops at £6.95.

The curiosity of this development is that, quite unconsciously, the "authors" of such role-playing gamebooks have achieved a literary breakthrough, the destruction of the linearity of text. In 1969 B. S. Johnson offered us *The Unfortunates* as a box containing chapters of the novel that could be shuffled and read

in any order, but that is nothing compared to the paragraph by paragraph chances of the gamebooks. In "interactive fiction" the reader becomes his own author, and mathematically it would be impossible to read the same book twice.

I understand that the more literary-minded inhabitants of the world of fantasy and science fiction tend to look askance at the "Dungeons and Dragons" enthusiasts. Colin Greenland, co-editor of *Interzone* (a magazine of imaginative writing, now threatened by Arts Council cuts), says that such works tend to be regarded as "unbooks". The sci-fi community is so sensitive to their imprisonment in a genre ghetto that such challenges to the accepted literary form of the book must be fended off. Greenland comments that having lived so long with imaginary computers, science fiction writers are having difficulty in coming to terms with the micro-processor revolution, now it has arrived.

To borrow a computer term, a second generation of role-playing adventure books is now on the way. Jackson and Livingstone are being challenged by the greater sophistication of the "Lone Wolf" series commissioned by Sparrow Books from Joe Dever and Gary Chalk. *Flight from the Dark* will be published in book and computer form this June. Gary Chalk explains that their series is not a succession of simple quests, but sends the reader across an entire imaginary world, Magnum. The reader will be able to carry characters and characteristics from one book into another.

Chalk insists on the importance of the aesthetic element in the "Dungeons and Dragons" cult. Playing one of these games, if it is going well, is a creative act. There is an enormous cross-over with literature; we plan to publish an atlas and a compendium to Magnum, and that will take our readers back to our sources. The point about role-playing games is that the quest goes on for ever. Nobody wins, and you only lose by dying.

Sounds like Samuel Beckett to me.

Still on the subject of the influence of computers on literature, it was the microprocessor revolution that made Public Lending Right possible, and the Registrar's mainframe in Stoke-on-Trent is producing a mass of statistics about our true reading habits. According to the PLR loan sample, the romantic novelist Catherine Cookson had 6,250,000 books issued from public libraries last year, which works out at 18,000 copies borrowed every day. Heinemann claim that on the basis of these statistics they are publishing the most popular contemporary novelist in the United Kingdom. Any other bids?

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

- J. N. Adams's *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* was published in 1982.
 Harold Beaver is the editor of *The Science Fiction of Edgar Allan Poe*, 1976.
 Aubrey Burl is the author of *Rites of the Gods*, 1981.
 John Burnett's *The Autobiography of the Working-Class* will be published shortly.
 Sydney Cheekland's joint volume with Olive Cheekland, *Industry and Ethics, Scotland 1832-1914*, has recently appeared.
 Marise Cremona is a lecturer in Law at the City of London Polytechnic.
 Glyn Daniel is Emeritus Disney Professor of Archaeology at the University of Cambridge.
 R. W. Davies is Professor of Soviet Economic Studies at the University of Birmingham.
 C. R. Dodwell is Head of the History of Art Department at the University of Manchester.
 D. J. Enright is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Death*, which was published last year.
 Peter Fawcett is a lecturer in French at the University of Leicester.
 Sheridan Gilley is senior lecturer in Theology at the University of Durham.
 R. A. Greenwood's books include *The Haplochromine Fishes of the East African Lakes*, 1981.
 Peter Hebblethwaite is completing a biography of Pope John XXIII.
 Lotte Hellingrath is Assistant Keeper of Prints and Books at the British Library.
 Bruce Hepburn is a medical practitioner.
 Robert Henson's *Footlight: A Hundred Years of Cambridge Comedy* was published last year.
 Tim Hinton's books include *The Pre-Raphaelites*, 1970.
 Emrys Jones is a Reader in English Literature at the University of Oxford.
 Bruce Lunn is a Reader in Modern History at the University of St Andrews.
 I. M. Lewis is the author of *Social Anthropology in Perspective*, 1977.
 Peter Leachman is the editor, with Brian Tierney, of *Authority and Power: A Festschrift for Walter Dill Scott*, 1982.
 George D. Painter is the author of *Chaucer's England: The Longed-For Temper*, 1977.
 Vernon Scandell's collection of poems, *Winterlude*, was published in 1982.
 Christopher Selous Watson is co-author, with Hugh Selous Watson, of *The Making of a New Europe: R. W. Selous Watson and the Last Years of Austria-Hungary*, 1981.
 William Topping is Queen's Professor of Jurisprudence at University College London.
 N. O. Wiles is a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.
 Christopher Williams is a lecturer in English at Goldsmith's College, London.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Materials for study: the Renier Collection

J. S. Bratton

The Renier Collection of children's books and related materials was donated to the Victoria and Albert Museum by Anne and Fernand Renier in 1970; but it is only since the beginning of the year that this valuable new resource has become available, housed in a large convenient space, with a newly appointed permanent librarian. The Renier Collection is now open (by appointment only) to interested researchers.

In the words of Mrs Renier, "the collection provides material for the history of education, publishing methods (and chicanery), social customs, moral and religious inculcation, political indoctrination, changes in taste and behaviour, changing fashions, the biographical models held up for youth to emulate, from the 17th century onwards. If this large climax sounds at all like the typical self-justification of notable lunatic magpies, the impression is a false one: this is unusual among private collections for its deliberate and purposeful inception and pursuit. Ruth Baldwin, whose collection became the Baldwin Library of Children's Books at the University of Florida two years ago, confessed that she "never made a plan", and built a great library almost by accident; the Reniers were political and social historians first and collectors of material to do with children second, when they realized its importance for such studies. They then deliberately set out to amass the contemporary as well as the early books and other objects which were still largely neglected by collectors, in the hope of providing future scholars with a body of evidence forming "an integrated and coherent whole".

There are already more than 30,000 volumes catalogued; when delivery and unpacking are complete, in two years' time, the total is expected to be around 70,000 and to include manuscripts, diaries, albums, original illustrations and correspondence, as well as ephemera relating to childhood, such as paper games, school records, postcards, matchbox labels, doll's-house furniture, Easter-egg boxes, printed handkerchiefs, jigsaw puzzles, records, cut-outs, doll-dressing books, broadsides, transfers and all such significant junk.

Such a sense of purpose, backed up by considerable optimism and courage, can turn the harmless private collector into a major force, and one which it is not easy to accommodate within official structures. When the collection was accepted by the Victoria and Albert Museum it was understood to include 40,000 items, but the Reniers continued steadily collecting until 1974, and selectively thereafter.

The original total itself meant in reality many more extra books than the Museum could comfortably house within its library, which is, after all, primarily devoted to art history and the art of the book. The accession of the tracts and trash and fantasy and propaganda of three centuries soon caused acute



"A Caution to Readers" by John D. Batten in Joseph Jacobs's *Celtic Fairy Tales*, 1892. From *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, by Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard (587pp. Oxford University Press. £15.00 19 211582 0), which will be published on April 26 and reviewed in a later issue of the TLS.

pressure upon space and resources; by 1974, when a total of 10,000 items had arrived, the narrow gallery in which they were shelved was full, and the books were increasingly being brought into use, which meant providing additional space for students. A crisis was reached in 1977, when the accessioning of books was far behind because of staff cuts, and there was simply no more space to store, let alone unpack, the stream of boxes. More than 14,000 books had arrived by then.

At this point the decision to move the collection to the more appropriate guardianship of the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood was taken, and, pending the building of a library to house it there, the fifth floor of Neil House in Whitechapel was assigned to it. The transfer closed the collection to users; but now it is open again, and receiving the rest of the books and other items as rapidly as possible. There are hopes for new premises one day, housing not only this collection but also the other children's books in the Victoria and Albert Museum, including the Guy Little Collection. Furthermore, the new publications for the young which go to the National Book League for its annual *Children's Books of the Year* exhibition of the tracts and trash and fantasy and propaganda of three centuries soon caused acute

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Those whose interest is in the physical and economic evidence of that expansion are well provided with materials here. As Mrs Renier has indicated, both the enterprise and the chicanery of the publishers who exploited the new juvenile market can be seen at work. A path can be traced from the haphazard provision of chapbooks, to the subsidized issuing of the Cheap Repository tracts, and onwards to the century-long attempt of the Religious Tract Society to keep control of the two-edged tool of literacy. Commercial operators were not to

be kept out of so lucrative a field; there are examples here of the work of dozens of firms which were floated on that early-nineteenth-century wave, ranging from opportunists like Thomas Tegg, whose pirated "Peter Parley" books are well represented, to committed specialists like James Nisbet and Thomas Nelson.

Nisbet was a giant of the heroic days of the juvenile book trade. Arriving in London from a Scottish farm, young and penniless, he launched himself with gusto into Evangelical activity, and everything he touched grew under his hand from a humble charitable exercise to a thumping success. He started a Sunday School in a carpenter's shed in an alley, getting up at 4 am to learn himself the lessons he wanted to teach. In 1803 he founded the Sunday School Union; his little school became a day-school, and then the Fitzroy Schools, with fine buildings in Hertford Place; by 1853 he had educated 14,000 children, many of them destined to carry on his work in the mission field. His book-selling enterprise began in 1809 as part of his efforts to find and disseminate suitable materials for his educational purposes; discovering that they did not exist, he rapidly became a publisher, and in 1824 a librarian, with a "Select Theological Circulating Library" whose vast stock of new publications for the young could probably be reconstructed from the Renier Collection.

Nisbet combined commercial with Christian principles, a genius for money with an unwelcome view of its proper uses. One aspect of the combination was that he always paid his authors well; and this was the principle that enabled the publishing house he left behind him to win and keep the loyalty of authors like R. M. Ballantyne, whose books for boys turned the formulaic tract into the best seller. Nelson, who had not treated him generously. It was, however, Nelson's harder and more deliberately progressive business and production methods that set the distinctive stamp on the physical appearance of the Victorian children's book, and exploited a booming market with a mass-production business. Starting in Edinburgh as a second-hand bookseller, Nelson opened his first London office in 1843 and his first New York branch in 1854, pioneering the international distribution of cheap literature. His son invented a rotary printing machine, which was installed in their Scottish factory in 1850. In the Renier Collection, row upon row of decorated "Reward" books with such delights as gold-blocked gorillas or full-colour pictorial boards showing ships under sail, bear witness to the success of the Nelsons' lead; and the rich diversity of talent which was subsequently devoted to writing, illustrating and printing books for children can be traced here at every level.

Nelson's themselves remained chiefly interested in mass markets, and when the education acts of the 1870s created a new area for

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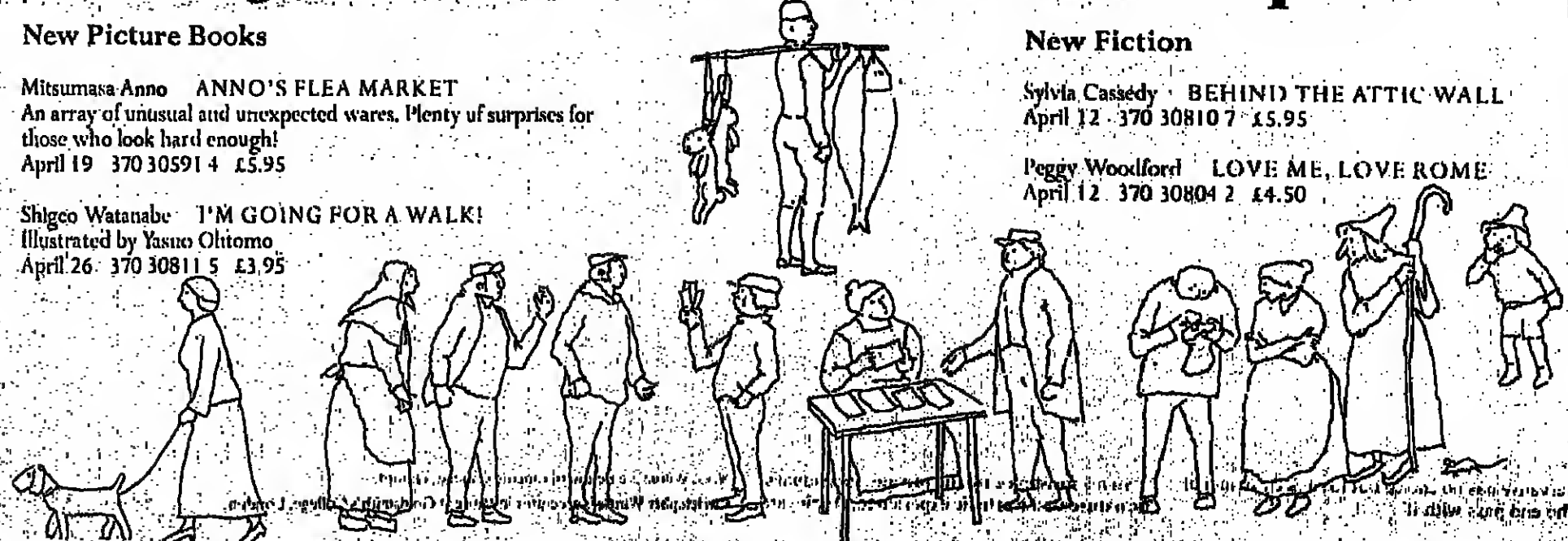
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potentially enormous sales, they invented a new kind of book for it, the graded "reader". Keeping up with educational changes, and the less tangible shifts in social emphasis that render school-books perpetually obsolescent, the firm became (as it remains) a specialist in educational publishing. The history of the development of school-books can be read in fascinating detail from the sets of readers and later teaching materials that are assembled in the Renier Collection. There are already over 1,300 readers on the shelves, from 164 different series. Here is the material for a study of teaching methods and expectations that could make an important contribution to current debate about literacy; and for the feminist and other sociologists who are exploring the social messages absorbed while the child is learning to read.

When the collection is fully delivered and in use, the Reniers hope that it will fuel a diversity of social and historical research must surely be fulfilled. Their broad vision of what is important is forming and reproducing social culture brought together thousands of carefully written stories and expensively illustrated picture-books, representing an array of earnest intentions, from *Sandford and Merton* to the Initial Teaching Alphabet, with romance chap-books, blunders, monster comics, TV spin-offs, pop-up racist caricatures and other "penny packets of poison" from three centuries.

The collection also provides for studies in depth, being "more than representative" in many chosen areas, ranging from the

literature of Empire to the work of specific illustrators such as Kate Greenaway and Honor Appleton and ancient and modern representations of folk heroes like Robin Hood. The "animals" classification is one example of the down-to-earth but imaginative cataloguing which the Collection is receiving; three double-stacked shelves for cats, four for dogs, with an extra one for puppies.

The section which might best illustrate the imaginative creativity of the collection is the group of doll-dressing books. Such publications, essentially ephemeral and virtually invisible to anyone but their consumers, are hardly ever preserved; they are tuned exactly and launched rapidly to capture transient vogues. They sell, are cut up and disappear; their publishers cannot supply copies six months later. There are 500 of them in the collection, beginning with Dean's New Dress Book, containing the story of Rose Merton the little orphan, who starts in rags and ends, on the page where "Miss Merton is quite rich, and graceful in all her ways". Putting her beside cut-out Mary Quant fashions and a cardboard Twiggy, and deconstructing the messages conveyed to little girls, should occupy some very fruitful scholarly hours, if the use made of the Renier Collection in any way matches the imaginative insight that went into its creation.

Access to the Renier Collection is by appointment only. Enquiries should be addressed to Tessa Chester, Renier Collection, Neil House, 7 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

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Forgotten favourites

Julia Briggs

PATRICIA DEMERS
A Garland from the Golden Age:
an anthology of children's literature from 1850-1900
508pp. Oxford University Press £7.50.
019 5404149

Anthologies are fun to put together and seldom entirely unrewarding for their readers, but to justify their existence they ought either to fulfil a particular need or express a distinctive sensibility. Patricia Demers's anthology of children's literature from the second half of the nineteenth century, *A Garland from the Golden Age*, is a sequel to her earlier selection, *From Instruction to Delight*, whose terminal date was 1850. Her previous volume had an obvious value for students of the genre since so many of the primers and chapbooks it reproduced in full or (too often) in part had become collectors' items: eighteenth-century penny histories now sell for thousands of pounds, and most of us have little hope of handling these delicate rarities, once so commonplace, cheap and well-thumbed as to be thought not worth preserving. Yet already in the earlier volume a wide coverage tended to curtail the length of individual items, and consequently lessen their impact. Inevitably, the new anthology, with so much rich material to draw on once children's publishing had become big business, spreads its jam even thinner, and Professor Demers has not resisted the temptation to include a little of everything and not very much of anything. Wide nets trawl up a variety of small fry from England and America, but scarcely a full-grown specimen among them. A parochial partiality has further extended the range to include examples from Canadian children's literature that are not self-evidently worth the space they occupy. Catherine Parr Trill's limited achievements hardly warrant her inclusion in both these anthologies, let alone her ousting Louisa M. Alcott, Thackeray's *The Rose and The Ring* or the ever-popular Frances Hodgson Burnett from the later volume.

Recording omissions is every critic's favourite parlour game, and it is unfair to complain on the one hand of the brevity of examples provided, on the other of the exclusion of one's own pet pieces. But there is a more serious question to be asked about the usefulness of this anthology as a whole. It is apparently intended primarily for students of children's

books rather than for children or general readers, and it may be that two or three paragraphs plus an excerpted chapter can be more directly informative than a critical account of comparable length, yet so many of the more important writers included here—Kingsley, MacDonald, Mrs Molesworth, Lewis Carroll, Kenneth Grahame, E. Nesbit, Kipling and "Uncle Remus"—are widely available in libraries or bookshops. The best of children's literature has stood the test of time, and is still accessible. Yet the second or third-rate children's books are also of interest to historians of literature and culture, in addition to their significance for specialists in the genre. A few such books—*The Wide, Wide World*, *Ministering Children*, *Eric, or Little by Little*—can oblige a generation, some of whom may react violently against their angst-inducing influence: Kipling and Nesbit children set their faces firmly against evangelical ministrations and "boastfully Ericking". Such books, greatly loved and hated, can cultivate the imagination of their readers at a formative stage. Demers gives us a taste of some of these forgotten favourites, but a more rigid exclusion policy would have left more space for the influential, unfamiliar and unprinted.

In the rare cases where texts are short enough to appear uncut, as Ruskin's *The King of the Golden River* or Mrs Clifford's *The New Mother* do here, there is an obvious gain. *The New Mother* serves to remind us how many Victorian children's books implied overt or, as here, covert threats of the appalling consequences of disobedience. Mother warns her beloved children that they will only be naughty if they do not truly love her, recalling the taboo of Genesis and many similar warnings. The tempted children foil, and do not merely forfeit the loved mother, but find themselves part of a grotesque, inescapable and uncondoned nightmare of desertion and desolation. Here, as elsewhere, an insistence on obedience and moral self-discipline is accompanied by an extraordinary pre-Freudian blindness to the implications of language and metaphor. In a limping echo of *Goblin Market* Christina Rossetti's discontented Flora is punished by a sinister troop who treat her as their pin cushion:

Quills with every quill erect tilted against her, and needed not a pin; but Angus whose corners almost cut her, Hooks who caught and slit her frock, Slim who slid against and pinched her, Sticky who rubbed off on her neck and plumped bare arms... and the whole laughing scolding pushing troop, all welded longest sharpest pins, and all by turns overtook her.

Just reading

Alan Brownjohn

BING TAYLOR and PETER BRAITHWAITE
The Good Book Guide to Children's Books
79pp. Penguin. £3.50.
014 0071342

The bright well-ordered pages of this undoubtedly useful guide to the wide realm of children's books suggest a profusion of choice for parents. But is it entirely unfair to imagine that the most stimulating guides are those which suggest an agony of choice for their editors? The trouble here, very crudely, is that the attractive listings of six hundred books for convenient purchase, in named bookshops or by direct mail order, look like an expanded catalogue: the "crisp reviews" appended to each title are nearly all of them descriptive recommendations.

Is inclusion itself a recommendation, with only the very best books listed (difficult to believe, for example, in a "Poetry" section which is both sparse and indiscriminating, with some shameful omissions)? It would appear not, though there is some ambiguity on this point. Should children read Enid Blyton, who is so very popular? Well not really, the prefatory advice implies, except that "getting through books is a joy in itself" (so the Famous Five Series is admitted to the ranks of the 600 as material for "just reading"). Is there possibly some subtle code in operation in this phraseology? I am not sure when *Wall Disney's* *Walt Disney's* is modestly cited as "a good book" (the phraseology for

the nearly fluent". Perhaps the further refinement of very faint praise as an instrument of discrimination might be considered for future editions.

If such a guide was worth doing (which it was), it was worth doing well, with above all a fuller, more alert appraisal of books for very real differences of tone and approach. Who would be able to distinguish, in the pages devoted to "Picture Books for the Very Young", the books that are honest in narrative and single in illustration from the volumes where the brief stories are ingeniously original and entertaining, and the drawings delightful? How "great" are the "Modern 'Greats'" listed here (one of them is a recently published novel, and another is an abridgement)? Are there really so few "Animal Stories" in print, and of such variable quality?

The *Guide* is older and a little wiser, in passing from its first edition to its second. It notes that public library spending is down by 23 per cent in the past five years, and school funding by 13.7 per cent; real and recent reasons for encouraging parents to buy more books, though the pleasures of a really large library stock were worth mentioning. The first edition of the *Guide* suffered some criticism for not awarding some books and authors black marks on other grounds, and now asks whether, for example, we should be concerned about sexism in children's books. The answer is yes, but it is difficult to avoid "in the end" a defensive contortion; trying to be all persons ties you in some peculiar

Empire days

J. K. L. Walker

LOIS LAMPLUGH
Falcon's Tor
121pp. Deutsch. £4.95.
0233 975543

Lost in the mist on the moor behind his Devon house one Midsummer's Eve, fourteen-year-old Aidan Westleigh finds himself on a journey back into the past. A fall from the mysterious pony which has borne him to the ruins of a great house knocks him unconscious and he wakes up to find himself in bed in the resurrected mansion, Falcon's Tor. The year, he discovers is 1915, a period he hazily remembers studying at school. Now, rather alarmingly, he is to experience at first hand what it is like to be a member of a well-to-do English family during the Great War: for to the Morehards, who own the estate, he is their younger son Arthur.

The doors are thus thrown open for Lois Lamplugh to conduct the reader on a guided tour of part of the English heritage. Points of interest are explained without fuss: bicycle bells and collars were heavy, clothes scratchy, table settings and servants complicated; on the other hand, twopence bought an astonishing amount of sweets, the Napier had splendid tip-up seats, you didn't have to eat the breakfast kedgeree if you didn't feel like it. The tour is well conducted, without superciliousness, nostalgia or resentment. Aidan, in any case, isn't left gawping at the gun-room, being far too busy adjusting to his supposed status within the family and puzzling out how to escape back to his own time—not that he is any too sure when that is. Amnesia, though, excuses an otherwise culpable vagueness about the names of brother Julian and sisters Eleanor and Minn, to say nothing of his school. Julian, he learns, is at home convalescing from wounds he has received in France but is soon due to face an army medical board; Eleanor, painting in her tower room, mourns their neighbour's son, Ronald Anstey, whom she had hoped to marry but who

has been killed (his mother has furnished a memorial room to him, complete with officer's uniform in a glass case). Minn, a year or two younger than Aidan but gifted with a shrewdness verging on second sight, predicts that Mrs Morehard will construct a similar shrine to Julian when, rather than if, he too is killed. The same quality enables her to recognize Aidan's unArthurian true self and she becomes his accomplice in his escape back to the 1980s where, in a satisfying piece of double-casting, she plausibly ties up the loose ends of the story.

While Aidan is still recovering from his fall, he is given *Stirring Adventure Stories for Boys*,

Final horrors

Dominic Hibberd

JOHN GORDON
Catch Your Death and other ghost stories
120pp. Patrick Hardy. £5.95.
07444 00295

The blurb is enough to give anyone the shudders: "feel the shock of discovering that you live only in the land of ghosts! see the world through the eyes of Black Shuck... These are just two of the nine riveting ghost stories in John Gordon's haunting collection; and Jeremy Ford's... illustrations complement [sic] the stories perfectly." This travel-brochure silliness is misleading. Gordon himself can at least write with a certain stylishness, and he can spell. But his hook neither rivets nor haunts; it merely repels.

The opening story is characteristic. A boy talks to the occupant of a grave, pressing his nose against a crack in the stone. We discover at the end that he is eating the deadly pills which his mother had left around to tempt his harassed father. In the event, Dnd had preferred to hang himself in the shed. The plot is revealed with ingenuity, but what could have been a sympathetic study in human relation-

a volume with a Union Jack embossed on the cover and a picture of a group of mounted men with an officer waving a sword. Ms Lamplugh thus gives a passing nod to the plucky-boy-bugler tradition while noting the more up-to-date version of "quagmire battlefields where men lived and killed in great ditches they had dug". Julian glosses for Aidan's benefit *Times* reports on "stirring incidents" at Wytschaete, Givenchy, Vermelles and elsewhere ("Poor old Ronald was blown up at Givenchy. It was certainly stirring for him") and the thousand-day casualty lists— "give or take a hundred or two". Yet like many of his real-life prototypes

he longs to get back to the real life of the trenches, to escape the world of domestic make-believe patriotism typified by his father's map of the battlefield with its little red, white and blue flags which "ought to be black". Ms Lamplugh plays fair by acknowledging that many fought, or enlisted at least, out of adventure or patriotism, but there is little she could have done to make this John Bullishness convincing; Aidan no doubt would have found the Empire even scratchier than the shorts for everyday wear. Despite a certain lack of flavour, *Falcon's Tor* is nicely balanced, knowledgeable and neatly written.

ships turn out to be something less admirable. The boy and his adolescent sufferings are exploited for thrills. "Black Shuck" is no better; teacher loves the book manager but is kept at home by a selfish old mother; two children meet Black Shuck, a death-dealing ghost-dog somehow left over from the Dark Ages, and take him to teacher as a present: he frightens the old mother to death. End of story. Clearly, the children have done teacher a good turn. If a sly dog hadn't been available, would they have fetched out a bit of old rupe from the shed? It's true that they don't fully know what they're doing, but we do—and apparently we're meant to approve.

Catch Your Death is published as a children's book for no obvious reason. Five of the stories have children as principal characters, but in all but one of these the plot depends on the actions and memories of older people. The one exception is perhaps the best story in the book, a tale of a boy who slowly realizes he is a ghost and who is shown by another ghost-boy how to terrify living children. The adult characters are mostly disgraceable nonentities, bored, vicious and resentful. Gordon seems particularly uneasy about old age; the final horror for one naughty youth is not so much being turned into an old woman's long-dead idiot son as being

kissed by her wrinkled lips. Gordon clearly knows a thing or two. Black Shuck is given Old English alliteration and some poetic imagery. Speaking voices and descriptions are sometimes well handled. The last story, written in a slightly Victorian style, describes an academic visiting a provincial library in search of Kents relics and finding a pot of snail in the courtyard. The literary parallels seem quite promising for a while, but they collapse unused when the story lizzles out in what the blurb-writer would no doubt call a "shock". It is a depressing book.

The Bologna Book Fair Graphic Prizes this year have been awarded to *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* by Charles Perrault, illustrated by Sarah Moon and published by Gmsset Editions, Paris (Junior Section) and *Alenka v kraj divu* (Alice in Wonderland) by Lewis Carroll, illustrated by Marketa Prachaticka and published by Albatross, Prague (Youth Section). Among the books recommended by the jury in this section are *The Human Body* by Jonathan Miller (Cape) and *How weather works* (Pavilion Books). The "Critici in erba" prize was awarded by a jury of children between the ages of six and nine to *Mame's cats 1,2,3* from the Japanese publishing house Kaisei-Sha.

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In the real world

Sarah Hayes

SUSAN PRICE
From Where I Stand
136pp. Faber. £5.50.
0 571 132472
RUKSHANA SMITH
Rainbows of the Gutter
126pp. Bodley Head. Paperback. £3.50.
0 370 305264

In *Our Lives*, a collection of autobiographical pieces written by young people from immigrant families, which was published by ILEA English Centre in 1979, surprisingly little weight was placed on racial prejudice. The irony of a society in which prejudice is endemic is that insults and bullying are expected and therefore swiftly coped with. They are not intrinsically interesting to the sufferer who looks much more to family and friends to generate important emotions such as love or hate. The emotional strength of *From Where I Stand*, however, derives entirely from prejudices of one sort or another.

Kamla Moimen is a giddy-giddy Muslim sixth-former of Bangladeshi extraction who keeps herself to herself, works hard and intends to be a doctor. Jonathan Ullman is an unemployed ex-pupil in his twenties who haunts his old school and fires Kamla with resentment by comparing "Paki-baiting" with Nazi death camps. Jonathan's sister is herself being persecuted for being Jewish while Sharon, her persecutor, is having identity problems. The reader is also allowed a modish peep into the staff-room to look at a frumpish liberal teacher who gets exploited, a pretty probationary teacher with discipline problems and a hard-line approach, and a wishy-washy headmistress who has learnt not to waste time on her own inadequacies. Each person is seen to be the victim of his or her self-image. Kamla responds to Jonathan's attack on her complacency by producing an ill-conceived inflammatory pamphlet filled with photographs of Nazi atrocities and naming racist teachers. She has to decide whether to withdraw her allegations or be expelled. Sharon, who is obsessed with the French Resistance, finds herself beating up a Jewish classmate.

Susan Price tries to be fair. She shows how prejudice arises; how genuine suffering can turn into paranoia; how fine is the dividing line between healthy publicity and mindless propaganda. She paints a plausible picture of five days in a "good" urban comprehensive. After a

shaky start with too many viewpoints thrust at the reader simultaneously, her story works up to an excellently written dramatic confrontation between headmistress and pupil. But – and the "but" is there from the beginning – all her characters are very unsympathetic. In an effort to be fair to everyone, she ends up being unfair to the reader, who is tempted to wish a plague on all their houses.

Rukshana Smith's approach in *Rainbows of the Gutter* is also scrupulously fair, but the effect is quite different. This is a first-person autobiographical narrative which takes a boy from a second-generation Jamaican immigrant family from primary school to marriage, fatherhood and security. The narrator, Philip Brown, manages to survive extremes of racial disharmony without ever becoming angry or bitter, or indeed involved. His emotions are all channelled into drawing and painting – as he tells his mother, he sees only beauty in the mould growing on the walls of their slum rooms. Only when Philip's adored sister, who is a radical journalist, dies in a petrol-bomb fire does a note of disillusionment creep in. The waste of life and energy during the Falklands conflict (both these novels deal with very recent history) confirms Philip in his decision to stop trying to fight for the country which has harassed and insulted him. Henceforth he will think only of the welfare of himself and his family.

Despite the dramas of the story, from teachers attacked by schoolboys to arson and stabbings during the Brixton riots, there is an air of piety about this book that strains its credibility. Philip is simply too good to be true: never angry, never provoked, never putting a foot wrong, being an instant success at everything he tries – painting, friendship, marriage, running a multi-ethnic shop, family relationships. When things go wrong around Philip, the reader is treated to a lecture.

There is much that is good, however – the British Caribbean background is full of incidental interest, and eccentric characters like Ras Peter, who combines vision with arson, make for a richly varied canvas. Once again, though, the story is spoiled by being shackled to its message. Everything that happens can only ever be seen in its racial context, and that is a pity. Rukshana Smith and Susan Price must be admired for their courage in speaking out. Perhaps, though, they and other crusading novelists can be persuaded to weave their ideas into the fabric of their writing, rather than leaving them printed on the surface.

A hero's home

Allan Mackie

TORSEIDLER
Terpin
90pp. Deutsch. £4.95.
0 233 976337

Terpin Taft is on the train home to North Haven, soon to be renamed North Tafton. "You know what they say – all great people are lonely deep down. Don't you think there's something lonely about his face?", his fellow passengers wonder. Soon we are flashed back some thirty years to Terpin's childhood, when on the same train he tied to a weeping man in an effort to cheer him up. Terpin hears that the man has killed himself, the untrue story having doubled his grief, then he finds in his pocket the Greek coin the man had pressed on him and which he had refused.

The coin is a magic talisman. Terpin has a vision of Socrates, already his theoretical hero, who directs him that "you will never speak or act except by the truth in your heart". The consequences of this are mixed. Shocking his mother and her circle out of their apathetic seven years of canasta will ultimately revivify them, but telling his best friend, who keeps

falling over, that he should practise music rather than sports is immediately estranging and foreshadows the latter's failure. A public row with his father and the mayor about local redevelopment and the decision not to enter his school's essay competition in the required number have such dire results – he is threatened with military academy – that Terpin leaves home. A reporter interviewing him on the train fills in his missing years as a bellhop attending night school, studying law and rising to become "the youngest Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in our nation's history".

It is obviously good to remind British children that there are more mobile societies, and the American setting poses no problem. The last chapter, in which the reporter stands in for Terpin, who is recognized only by his old friend and surreptitiously passes the coin on to a boy supposed to greet him, is sentimental but powerful. Terpin indulges and cautions the fantasy of greatness by reminding his readers that the cost of virtue is a real cost: its hero is truly heroic and North Haven is a credible community, properly named for the cold, romantic homecoming childhood desires and fears in maturity. The story's point is simple and familiar, but there are sufficient liveliness and humour to keep the pages turning.

Across the pond

Gillian Cross

JUQUEANGELL
A Word From Our Sponsor: or My Friend Alfred
140pp. Bradbury Press/Collier Macmillan.
£5.50.
0 02705750 X
EMILY HANLON
Circle Home
237pp. Bradbury Press/Collier Macmillan.
£5.50
0 02 72640 8.

To be ignorant today of such things as Kool-Aid or trick-or-treat or taking credits at Junior High, the eleven or twelve-year-old reader would have to be deliberately avoiding large numbers of American children's books. Often written in the first person, in a distinctive, slangy, wise-cracking style, they share a common background of dating, fast food and awareness of social problems. Together, these elements form a pattern, almost recognizable

as a genre, which seems different from anything in British writing for children. British authors seem to place a high value on timelessness, but many American writers feel a special need to establish common ground with their readers by using snappy, up-to-the-minute settings and language which assume a considerable degree of social sophistication.

On a simple level, this is illustrated by Juque Angell's *A Word From Our Sponsor*. Rudy Sugarman, the narrator, is addicted to old films on television, a taste he shares with Mrs Cam, his friend Alfred's working mother. Her fast food meals are described with a loving reminiscence of the famous Five's picnic.

Helped by Rudy and by Gillian (who is interested in personal relationships because her parents are divorced) Alfred bottles to get people to believe that there is a dangerous lead glaze on mugs which his father's advertising agency is promoting. (The story is peppered with references to Ralph Nader and the Food and Drug Administration.) The advertising agency's reluctance to believe in the poisonous glaze seems unlikely, but the children's search for a sympathetic pressure group is amusing, although their success is perhaps too easy. The last part of the book has a disappointing blandness. Alfred's father does not, after all, get sacked by the advertising agency and everyone is exonerated, even the Food and Drug Administration. The slightly tongue-in-cheek treatment of the story's background is more appealing than the tale itself.

The same cannot be said of Emily Hanlon's *Circle Home*. Its heroine is, to all outward appearances, thirteen-year-old Isabelle Leasing (with a sulky teenage brother and a mother studying law). But the real Isabelle died in an accident four years ago and her body houses the mind and spirit of Mai, a Stone Age girl. Gradually Mai discovers who she really is. After a determined but disastrous attempt to force herself to conform as a twentieth-century American teenager, she gives up and, somewhat mysteriously, finds her way back to her Stone Age family via a tangle of tunnels underneath the shopping mall. The author is careful to establish that all this is meant literally, but there is nothing to make the reader believe that Mai is experiencing any profound cultural shock or that her consciousness is substantially different from that of thousands of other twentieth-century girls. Her Stone Age self is revealed in a sentimental love of flowers and animals and a desire to dance around on a flimsy clothing. To fit in, at school she makes earnest study of records and television programmes but she is finally rejected and humiliated, because she does not know what "making out" means. The innumerable people who have suffered similarly in their teens will be depressed to discover that the only remedy Emily Hanlon can see for this is a return to the Stone Age. Surely American teenagers can really be under quite such pressure.

Rewarding the reader

Ann Thwaite

It is very difficult to be original, impressive and flavoursome in the compass of "bridge books" for six to nine year olds. There undoubtedly remains a constant need for short books with large type, plenty of illustrations, a reasonably limited vocabulary and a clear story-line, as their readers gain the confidence to tackle the full-scale children's novel. Of course some readers bypass these series altogether – particularly since we now recognize that picture books are not just for the under-sixes. Others need these bridge books for only a couple of months, and a few for as many years.

But it is obvious that most children who read them will still be finding something of an effort, and so it is particularly important that the effort should be rewarded, whatever the age of the reader. There used to be an unwritten rule that children liked to read about children older rather than younger than themselves. This seems to have gone by the board, with ten-year-olds still unashamedly re-reading *My Naughty Little Sister*. The other rule was that girls will read about boys but boys won't read about girls, which accounted for the preponderance of male central characters. There has now been a swing in the opposite direction.

Sheila Lavette gets round that problem by making her Ursula at least sometimes a bear, and it is the bear that appears on the cover of *Ursula Sailing*. This is Ursula's well-justified fifth appearance in the Gazette series, and two of the books are now available in one Beaver paperback. Ursula as bear can both climb well enough to rescue her glider when it lands in a tree, and swim well enough to survive when the branch snaps and lands her in the river. The mixture of reality and fantasy makes a satisfactory story. The other Gazette, *The Biggest Boast*, brings back memories of an old favourite, *Mr Morgan's Menorah*, by Prudence Andrew. Somehow the new moral, "Never boast", is rather less compelling than Mr Morgan's "Biggest isn't always best, boy."

Both *Smiley Tiger* and *Christabel* are part of the Blackbird series, and by particularly experienced writers. Barbara Willard mixes reality and fantasy too. The granny at the beginning is an unnecessary complication, but the "borrowing" and losing of the silver hux is just the sort of real-life dilemma likely to appeal to children of this age. Alison Morgan's book is a gentle, warm story of a goat's kidding, seen from the point of view of a small girl with twin older sisters.

The comparatively recent Redwing series is one stage on from Blackbirds (confusingly, as redwings are in fact rather smaller than blackbirds). *Midnight Pirae* by Diana Hendry is an odd old-fashioned story about a kitten, two old aunts (great-great-aunts, it would seem) and poor Ian who is staying with them. It is full of savour even when the supper isn't. ("Supper that evening was a very cold affair. Cold meat and cold feelings.") The other Redwing is a farce. The characters in Lance Sulway's *The Haunting of Henlock Hall* have names like Tom Pepperday and Rosie Trotter. And the moral of it seems to be it is better for a house to slumber silently than to be open to the "Great British Public".

Finally two Antelope books. A rather over-plotted, complicated story, *Radio Alert* by John Escott, at least has the advantage of an original subject: local radio. *Beryl the Rainmaker* by Joan Pilgson has the more positive advantage of a fully-rounded central character, who finds that life becomes difficult when she picks up a sparkling stone which seems to give her the power to bring rain.

Sheila Lavette: *Ursula Sailing*. Illustrated by Thelma Lambert. 40pp. Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 11239 7
Gillian Lindsay: *The Biggest Boast*. Illustrated by Valerie Littlewood. 40pp. Hamish Hamilton. £1.95. 0 241 11242 7
Barbara Willard: *Smiley Tiger*. Illustrated by Lucio Acs. 40pp. Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 161 3
Alison Morgan: *Christabel*. Illustrated by Mariella Jennings. 40pp. Julia MacRae. £2.95. 0 86203 136 2
Diana Hendry: *Midnight Pirae*. Illustrated by Janet Duchene. 42pp. Julia MacRae. £3.50. 0 86203 159 1
Lance Sulway: *The Haunting of Henlock Hall*. Illustrated by Angelica Verney. 48pp. Julia MacRae. £3.50. 0 86203 157 5
John Escott: *Radio Alert*. Illustrated by Trevor Stuhley. 90pp. Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 11240 0
Joan Pilgson: *Beryl the Rainmaker*. Illustrated by Lucio Acs. 44pp. Hamish Hamilton. £2.75. 0 241 11238 9

Strange scholars

Judith Elkin

MARGARET GREAVES
Charlie, Emma and the School Dragon
95pp. Methuen. £3.95.
0 416 460909
IMOGEN CHICHESTER
The Witch-Child
Illustrated by Charlotte Voake
143pp. Kestrel. £4.95.
0 7226 58389

The beginner reader always needs a supply of stimulating, imaginative stories which confirm the excitement of reading without being too demanding. Melhuysen's "Read Aloud" Series, on the whole, fulfils this need, providing a wide range of lively books suitable for the teacher or parent to read aloud to younger children or for the newly independent reader. Margaret Greaves's stories about the magical dragon family have delighted young children for many years. The magic is just about rooted in reality; the ideal kind of fantasy for the child between the ages of four and seven. At this age, a constant question is "What would happen if...?" These stories satisfy this demand in an original way. What would happen if two children found a tiny lizard crawling out of a crack in the roof? It might just turn out to be a baby dragon, who might just grow into a dragon with magical powers. The lives of these two ordinary children, attending a very ordinary junior school would be dramatically changed. Assume that the dragons are only visible when they want to be and we have the ingredients of many imaginative adventures, based within the familiar classroom setting. In *Charlie, Emma and The School Dragon*, the dragons have decided that their youngest son Ashley should attend school with Charlotte and Emma. Ashley has a tendency to get carried away and does not

always remember to stay invisible. On a trip to the Natural History Museum, for example, Ashley is so disgusted with the teacher's dismissal of the idea that dragons ever existed that he begins to glow fiery red. Margaret Greaves's stories are light but they show an imaginative spark which many books at this level lack.

The Witch-Child has much in common with this first title but is suitable for slightly older, more competent readers. The story was first published twenty years ago and has been re-issued with new illustrations by Charlotte Voake. It is still appealing though it might have been improved by prudent editing to reduce its length and cut out some of the slow-moving sections. Zachary, the wizard, Abigail, his witch wife and Necromancy, his trainee-witch daughter live in a deserted cave deep in the woods, visited by no one except the pedlar who buys their magic potions. The family are a cross between the Borrowers and the Picts, with Zachary as the competent handyman (aided by a little magic), Abigail, the long-suffering, practical homemaker and Necromancy, the self-reliant, lively, independent, dreamer. Necromancy's parents are horrified when she decides she wants to go to an ordinary school rather than be a witch. Her excursions into school and her naivety and ignorance of familiar school routines give rise to many humorous confusions, which are further complicated by Zachary's semi-invisible attempts to prevent his daughter revealing her witch origins. The story has timeless quality and children will enjoy the prospect of unusual happenings in the classroom.

The Signal Review of Children's Books 2, edited by Nancy Chambers, has recently been published (80pp. Thimble Press, South Woodchester, Stroud, Glos. £4.50. 0 913355 14 0). This volume covers books published in 1983.

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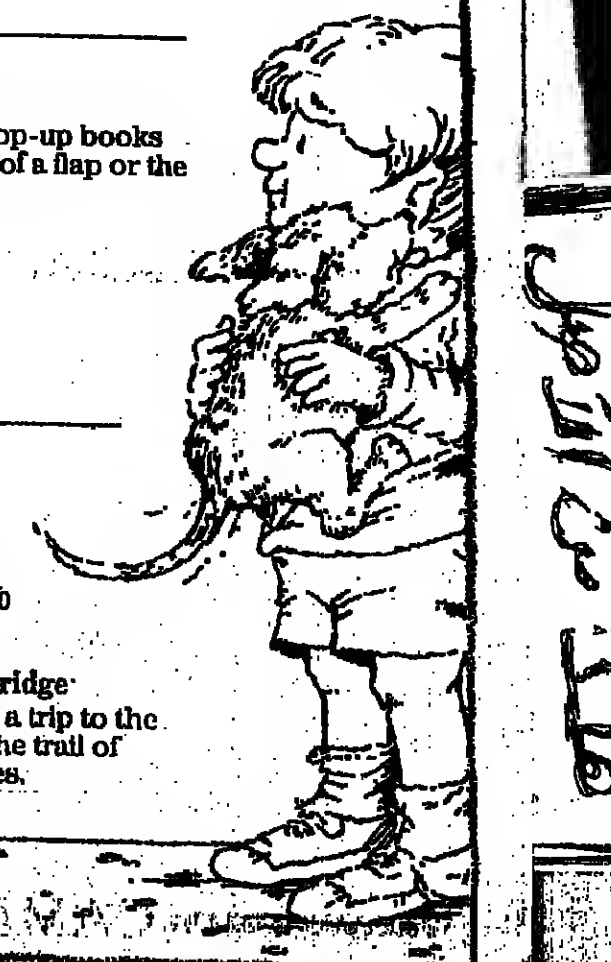
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A household spirit

Alan Hollinghurst

WILLIAM MAYNE
The Red Book of Hob Stories
0 7445 0120 2
The Green Book of Hob Stories
0 7445 0121 0
Illustrated by Patrick Benson.
Walker Books. £3.95 each.

Hob lives under the stairs. He is about two feet high, middle-aged, balding, Jewish, smokes a pipe and wears green slippers and a fleecy cotton vest and long-johns. He looks like a diminutive version of Mel Brooks, but his role is not to make people laugh: he is a simple, unironical person, conscientious and kind, and he survives by doing good.

The red and green books of Hob stories are the first in a promised spectrum of such volumes, each consisting of five stories. William Mayne's text and Patrick Benson's illustrations are genuinely complementary, the words riddling and elliptical, the pictures fondly detailed and evocative, each providing information not available from the other. Even so, the world they conjure consists as much of gaps, shadows and unknowns as of the solid geography of the house where Mr. Mrs. Girl, Boy, Baby, Budgie (and Hob) live. This family is visibly archetypal, as are its furniture, crockery and pots and pans, and its cupboard under the stairs where buckets, paint-brushes and turps are stored. Hob, though, is not visible, except by half-light: if there is lightning at night he disappears, and when he gets into a family photograph the flash obliterates his image and

spoils the picture.

That half-light is the ambiguous medium of the children's imaginings, in which Hob is needed as an assuager of fears and an explanation of the unknown. In a way he is like Mary Norton's Borrowers, a tiny and unseen occupant of the household, the rationalization of unaccountable occurrences. But whereas the Borrowers are a family, and are self-serving, Hob is single and a servant of the big people, indeed their guardian spirit. When a cough (a yellow and green bolus, feathery and fiery) invades the house, Hob shows how seriously he takes his work: "If I can't get rid of a simple cough I'm not fit to stsy". He is always in danger of dismissal: the children leave food and tobacco in his crotch (his cupboard hutch), the token of their belief in him as their pet and uncle; but if they leave clothing, Hob will have to go, and he reels mournful axioms on this subject: "If they cover Hob's back He's off down the track". "Never give him leather or thread Or into the weather he will read". Such phraseology is his moral touchstones: "He sleeps by day and keeps the house by night", he explains to himself, and his third-person references to himself intensify the sense that he only exists as a set of proverbial formulae, as the embodiment of the children's kind but exacting fantasy: "I wish Hob was more real", he says.

Each of the stories centres on a little domestic exorcism: Hob rides the house of threats by the exercise of tricks and magic, conveyed with cryptic economy in the short, present-tense sentences of the text, and with gratifying explicitness in the densely hatched and substantial pictures. Hob dispels the Boggart, an oaf-

ish, stubby creature, whom he detects when he hears the milk go sour, the bread mouldy, and who parsitically threatens to take over Hob's crotch; he collars the Black Dog, a shroud with eyes that is the materialization of all shadow fears; and with his flute he charms the Sad, a negative spirit at Christmas time, making cakes sad as well as people. The Sad is a wonderful creation, a cross between a suet pudding and a Louis Quinze footstool, woe-begone, weeping, biting its tongue and treading on its own feet. The Temper, round like a mine and covered with spikes; the Mump, a swollen pink medicine-bull; and the Storm, a vast Henry Moore figure made out of thunderclouds and carrying the lightning in its arms, are other brilliantly imaginative realizations of fears and dangers. By giving them a face and a name the pictures too help to exorcize these bugbears and terrors even as they make them vivid.

The immediacy of the pictures does not, however, lessen the mystery of Hob's magic acts, none of which is fully explained. For instance Mump is expelled by being shown a "smooth, washed stone, with a hole self-bared from front to back": the charm retains its effective esotericism. Others, like the tricking of a changeling baby (pipe-smoking, with long leathery feet) by boiling water in egg-shells and prompting it to object, "In all my long life I never saw tea made in egg-shells", so giving away its imposture, have the nature of a game which children will be able to grasp logically. The books captivate by just such a potent mixing and juxtaposing of the rational and the arcane.

Paula Neuss

BOB GRAHAM
Here Comes John
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Here Comes Theo
0 241 1201 1
Humphries & Co. £3.95 each.

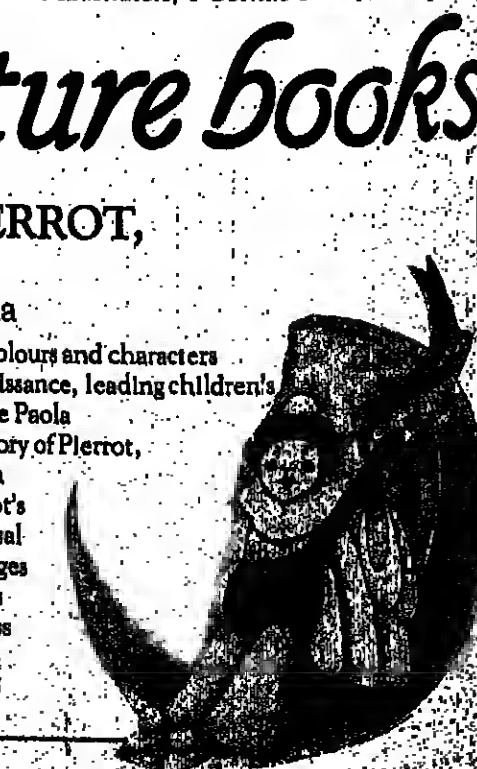
Bob Graham has pitched these books exactly right, avoiding tweezeness and condescension. To respect a snail, as a child might, isn't easy, but on its own scale the adventures of the gastropod featured in *Here Comes John* are as important as those of many a romantic hero. It negotiates an open box labelled "Get rid of unsightly snails" and a row of eager-beaked birds, escapes being stamped on by Theo the dog and is finally snatched from death in the jaws of baby John by hussy older Sarah. The hawk's title suggests that it will be about John, but the children are kept in the edges of both stories: Sarah is introduced by her feet and legs.

The dangers the snail overcomes are illustrated in witty cartoons seen from ground level. At the climax ("it's heading straight for John's mouth") the tiny creature sits precariously in the baby's fingers, just between his open lips and the inquiring nose of the dog. Two birds are perched on the fence and a large purposeful Sarah approaches from the opposite page. In *Here Comes Theo* the snail is relegated to its natural place while Theo charges about, knocking down almost everything in sight including Sarah and John, though not the snail. John's taking of his first step, a major event from an adult point of view, is a mere incident here, even at first a puzzling one ("but where is the step?", I was asked). Indeed the existence of adults goes almost unacknowledged in these two books. It is just hinted at in a glimpse of a trowel and some half-planted tomatoes and by the fact that Sarah calls Theodore by his full name when she is angry.

Graham's narrative is short and plain; as important for what it doesn't say as for what it does. The snail's protective shell is mentioned but its two friends, an ant and what looks like a lizard, have no such shells and do not appear when the beaky birds are sitting on the fence. Graham's use of repetition makes it possible for a small child to "read" the books himself after only one adult reading. And, like that of fairy tales and unlike that in books written purposely for "easy reading", the repetition relates to the development of the story. These books are fun, with bright pictures and bright jackets. And yet useful lessons emerge: "You don't put snails in your mouth, do you?" and "He shouldn't take his socks off" - morals that are undoubtedly more significant to a three-year-old than information on how to lay tables or behave in the dentist's.

The Association of Illustrators has recently announced a Young Illustrators Competition for artists under 30. The competition has been designed to resemble a publisher's commission for a set of imaginative illustrations from either

The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway, *This Time Next Week* by Leslie Thomas or *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. Further information is available from The Association of Illustrators, 1 Colville Place, London W1.



Now read on: recent picture books

Blake Morrison

It's not as easy as it seems to come up with good books for pre-school children. The two to five age group is an awkward one, for though an interest in narrative is developing and pictures-only board books have been put away, the accompanying reading skills and concentration spans are still limited. Simple, well-illustrated books of twenty or so pages are the conventional solution, but it is not surprising that publishers should seek out departures from the old formula. This can result both in embarrassing gimmicks and in pleasant surprises.

Alligator's Garden and *The House That Bear Built* are radical attempts to break away from traditional methods. Each contains a story of construction: how bear built his house and alligator her garden, the tools they use and workmen they employ. But instead of merely reading this (or having it read), children must themselves engage in constructive activity. Inside the front cover of the books is a pocket containing nine cards, with numbers and objects corresponding to those on the subsequent pages. As each page is turned, a new card has to be found and laid down on a paper grid, so that by the end a rectangular picture has been constructed. (There's a further "surprise" picture if the cards are turned over.) It would be hard to come up with an invention that so ingeniously combines the skills involved in reading on the one hand and in games like snap and dominoes on the other: it's a lesson in language, maths, housebuilding and horticulture at the same time. And unlike most book gimmicks, this one doesn't skimp on reading and information. The only drawback, both for parents and librarians, will be in preventing the cards from being mislaid.

Clement Hurd's experiment in *The Goodnight Moon Room* is to produce "an interactive pop-up book of a classic favourite". As the original illustrator to Margaret Wise Brown's rhyming tale of 1947, Hurd is clearly in no danger of vandalizing the text. The telephone in the green room is still there but can now be picked up. A red balloon lifts off to reveal the word "balloon" underneath; a pair of mittens are strung from a washing-line, with the word "mittens" below. The last (seventh) page opens out as a large room containing all that has appeared separately before, plus novelties like a roaring fire (spin the disc to make the flames), a cat on a rocking-chair that actually rocks, and a rabbit which will sit up in bed if you pull the right flap. It is a lively and colourful way to link word and object, though beset by the old pop-up problem: how long will the flimsy cardboard withstand rough handling?

Nancy Tafuri's *Early Morning in the Barn* shows a similar concern to help children grasp the association between words and objects, or more particularly between the sounds animals make and the symbols we use to represent them: from a dawn cacophony of farm noises, individual grunts and beeps are identified and illustrated. Little yellow chicks dash across the yard, the words "CHEEP CHEEP" preceding them; the grey cat has a "MIAOW" over its

head; one donkey has a "Hee" dropping from his mouth, another a "Haw". The quality of the drawings (which are large) is variable: excellent sheep and bull, but small birds of indeterminate species. One puzzling aspect is the handling of lower case and upper case letters: why "OUACK OUACK" but "Oink Oink"? The illustrations to Dick Gackenbach's *A*



Hob, as drawn by Patrick Benson, from *The Red Book of Hob Stories*, which is reviewed opposite.

Bag Full of Pups are a good deal more saccharine: his puppies behave in an implausibly adorable, let's-take-one-home-for-the-kiddies sort of way. The mural is saccharine too: Mr Mullin's dog has a litter of twelve pups, and he carries them off in a large sack to stand at the street-corner and dispose of them. Eleven are snapped up for particular uses: as farm-dog, guide-dog, show-dog, companion to a lady ("Mommie has a cookie for precious") and so on. When a small boy on a skateboard takes the last "to play with and be my friend" Mr Mullin comments, "My, that's what I call a lucky pup." (Moral: We should love animals, not exploit them.) An irritation to some readers will be the undiluted American-ness of the idiom: "I will take a pup", said the security woman. "He will help me catch the bad guys".

Another moral tale is Ellen Stoll Walsh's *Brunus and the New Bear*, about Benjamin and his two toy bears, and coyly dedicated to "the real Benjamin". Brunus has been Benjamin's bear since birth, but one day a "package" arrives with a new bear, Heek, inside. Brunus is ignored, takes umbrage and tries to hid Heek under the carpet. Belatedly Benjamin recognizes his jealousy and tells Brunus a story of a boy and two bears: "The first bear was very sad. He thought the boy didn't love him any more. But he was wrong. The boy loved him very much." This introspective allegory proves cathartic and the three live happily ever after. It's a very blatant parable even for toddlers (Benjamin = mother; Brunus = the firstborn; Heek = the new baby) and a stridently twee attempt to soothe sibling anxiety. The illustrations are

more subdued, though one never quite overcomes the feeling that such a big boy as Benjamin should be spending his time on something other than furry bears.

The one non-American import here is exceptional in every sense. The Danish Virginia Allen Jensen's *Catching* is a book of tactile shapes intended primarily as an introduction to reading (and braille) for blind or partially sighted children, but also of potential interest to sighted children. Out of simple geometric designs and raised, textured surfaces (hexagons, circles, jagged lines, stripes, large and small dots), a story unfolds involving Little Shaggy, Little Stripe, Little Rough and others, who play tricks and make up games and get scared in recognizably infant fashion. The narrative itself seems unnecessarily perfunctory, and the wisdom of giving the characters abstract names is questionable, but it is an enterprising and admirable venture none the less.

Michaela Muntean and Nicole Rubet: *Alligator's Garden*. Collins. £2.95. 0 001 13402 3.
Michaela Muntean and Nicole Rubet: *The House That Bear Built*. Collins. £2.95. 0 001 13401 5.
Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd: *The Goodnight Moon Room: A Pop-Up Book*. Patrick Hardy. £5.95. 0 7444 0026 0.
Nancy Tafuri: *Early Morning in the Barn*. Julia MacRae. £4.95. 0 86203 152 4.
Dick Gackenbach: *A Bag Full of Pups*. Kestrel. £4.50. 0 7226 5926 1.
Ellen Stoll Walsh: *Brunus and the New Bear*. Hodder and Stoughton. £4.50. 0 341 3379 11.
Virginia Allen Jensen: *Catching*. Collins. £4.95. 0 001 13565 4.

Illustrator folk

Tanya Harrod

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN
The Little Mermaid
Revised by Margaret Crawford Maloney
Illustrated by Larsen Gal
Methuen. £5.95.
0 161 46540 4

ROBERT D. SAN SOUCI
The Brave Little Tailor
Illustrated by Daniel San Souci
World's Work. £3.95.
0 437 73085 9

Unlike most artists who struggle to develop, the cartoonist succeeds best if he limits his range. Illustrators, similarly, often aim to consolidate a recognizable style early (Nicola Bayley's is the classic success story; she was discovered fully fledged at her degree show). Perhaps there is no harm in this if the artist's training has been good. With an illustrator like Harold Jones, for example, we are conscious of a figurative tradition ultimately derived from Blake and Palmer. Nor is Jones simply borrowing from or parodying that aesthetic; rather he is, in a minor way, extending it. Training is not crucial: it is quite easy for an illustrator to cover up technical inadequacies if the imaginative power is there. Like the autobiographical first novelist the amateur artist can produce a brilliant one-off, usually illustrating his own writing - Kipling's masterly drawings for *The Just So Stories*, for example.

Lazio Gal's interpretation of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid* falls down both on technique and imagination. Perhaps such an openly literary (though heart-rending) story is harder to illustrate than simple Grimm. Yet there is surely scope for an exquisitely decorative book perhaps based on minutely observed marine life. Gal is evidently no beachcomber and his mermaids are poor creatures whose abundant tresses scarcely compensate for their atick-like limbs. This is a shame, for their mysterious attraction for the landlubber will always be primarily anatomical: on assured handling of fish and flesh is required. The sea

witch is a test of an illustrator's imagination and many will feel let down by Gal's offering. Mildly leprous with yellow eyes and unkempt nails, she lacks the rich mistiness that is conjured up in the text. The second part of the story makes demands on an illustrator's narrative powers. How to convey the dumb mermaid's torment as she watches her prince woo and wed another? Gal adopts evasive tactics and only tackles the triangular relationship in a dull penultimate drawing. By modern standards this is a pretty book though irritatingly thin and insubstantial.

In Robert D. San Souci's version of *The Brave Little Tailor*, illustrated by Daniel San Souci, there is the usual "folk-tale" chronological confusion over styles of architecture, clothes and furniture, but the encounter with the giant is beautifully depicted. The mountainous landscape through which the tailor passes on his way to find his fortune takes up several pages of lovely drawings and quite makes up for San Souci's eclecticism with what planners call the built environment. Unfortunately as an example of the illustrated book ideal - perfect unity of text and pictures - *The Brave Little Tailor* is badly let down by an inappropriate typeface. With a little extra work on the part of the illustrator and the designer most illustrated children's books could look much more complete.

Volume 6 of *Children's Literature Review* edited by Gerard J. Senekel (294pp. Gale Research Co. \$66.00 8103 0331 0), has recently been published. Among the authors covered in this volume, which reprints excerpts from books, essays and reviews of the works of children's authors, are Hans Christian Andersen, Kate Greenaway, Hergé, Roddall Jarrell, Mary Norton, Jan Pienkowski and Alki Zei. Each author has an entry with a brief biography, an author's commentary, where possible, and a series of extracts intended to provide a record of his critical development. The book also contains a guest essay "The Children's Book World Today" by Zena Sutherland and a cumulative index and nationality index to volumes 1-6.

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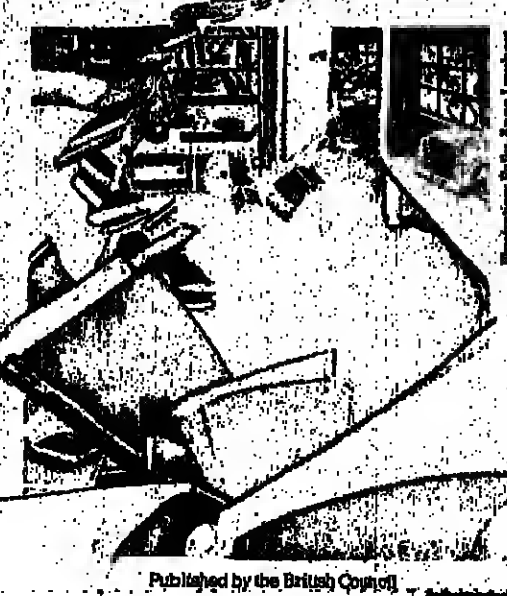
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Three poems by Ted Hughes

Fox

Who
Wears the smartest evening dress in England?
Checks his watch by the stars
And hurries, white-scarfed,
To the opera
In the flea-ridden hen-house
Where he will conduct the orchestra?

Who

With a Robin Hood mask over his eyes
Meets King Pheasant the Magnificent
And with silent laughter
Shakes all the gold out of his robes
Then carries him bodily home
Over his shoulder,
A swag-bag?

And who

Flinging back his Dracula cloak
And letting one fang wink in the moonlight
Lifts off his top hat
Shows us the moon through the bottom of it
Then brings out of it, in a flourish of feathers,
The gander we looked up at sunset?

The Bat

The beggarly Bat, a cut out, scattily
Bugs at the lamp's light
A bright moth-mote.

What wraps his shivers?
Scraps of moon cloth
Snatched off cold rivers.

Scissored bits
Of the moon's fashion-crazes
Are his disguises
And wrap up his fits—

For the jittery bat's
Determined to burst
Into day, like the sun

But he never gets past
The dawn's black posts.

As long as night lasts
The shuttlescock Bat
Is battered about
By the rackets of ghosts.

Hare

There's something eerie about a hare; no matter how stringy and old.
I heard of a hare caught in a snowdrift, brought in under a coat from the cold
Turned by firelight into a tall fine woman who many a strange tale told.

The hare has a powerful whiff with her, even when she's a pet,
Her back as broad and strong as a dog, and her kick like a bull-calf, yet
Into your dreams she waltzes, strung with starlight and music, a marionette.

They say it's a nude witch darning her rings though it looks like a lolloping hare
Circling the farm, like a full moon circling the globe, and leaning to stare
Bulge-eyed in at the midnight window down at the sleeping children there.

Something scares me about a hare, like seeing an escapee
From a looney-bin, lurching and loping along in his flapping pyjamas, free—
Or meeting a woman mad with religion who has fastened her eyes on me.

You'll never hurt a hare after you've heard her cry in pain.
A mother's scream, a baby's scream, and a needle slips in through your ear and brain.
To prick and prick your heart when you hear of the hurt of a hare again.

Matters of form

Eric Korn

GYLES BRANDRETH
1000 Knock-Knocks: the most ridiculous
knock-knock book ever known
208pp. Carousal. £1.25.
0 55254249 0

In the interests of precision, brevity and pedantry we need a symbol for the conventional joke formula, as represented by the following paradigm:

Knock. Knock.
Who's there?
Wyslan.
Wyslan Who?
Wyslan civilization is indeed in trouble if in times of crisis it cannot produce anything profounder than the knock-knock joke.

In this review I shall use the existential quantifier $\exists(x)$, which will here have the extended sense "there is (at least one) x such that x is knocking at the door and x is uttering the proposition 'my name is x'". This, naturally, begs a number of questions: is the assertion true? is "the knocker's name" the knocker's name? is there a sense in which, etc etc. For further discussion, see my forthcoming *The Ontological Knock; or, Dystouries est dehors, if not before dehors*. Meanwhile, the first four lines of any knock-knock joke may be represented by the line expression " $\exists(x):?$ ".

The modern representative of the form is very different from the Palaeolithic clonks I grew up with. Here is a state-of-the-art specimen from Gyles Brandreth:

\exists (Dmrlr)?
Dmrlr is where lamb chops grow.
Similarly classical in form but sophisticated in execution is
 \exists (Thérèse)?
Thérèse many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.

Gyles Brandreth has not ignored the plunners. Here are gathered all our old friends, Oscar, Victor, Ferdie and Lydia, to name but four, representatives of those fine old families the Stupid-Questions, the Hiss-Trousters, the Lass-Times and the Teapots. (Alas, Lydia Teapot, more formally Lydia Teapots-Missin, has a vulgar rival here, the proletarian Lydia Dustbins-Blown-Away: Mr Brandreth should really have invited only one of them.) But no matter, here are the lovely Misses Tew, Gladys E. Tew and Alice N. Tew (of Alice N. Tew & Ulysse N. Mee), and here is Fletcher. Just plain

Fletcher, Brandreth calls him, though most of us call him *Dorling Hugh Fletcher*.

\exists (Fletcher)?
Fletcher Self Go.

Music for the party is provided by Vera (all the flowers gone), Hannah (partridge in a pear tree) and the well-loved – and well-known-duo Sam and Janet Evening.

But
 \exists (Lucinda)?
Lucinda Sky With Diamonds
though evocative, seems a little underhand, and
 \exists (Rapunzel)?
Rapunzel troubles in your old kit-bag
is decided evidence of a rot creeping in, a lowering of standards and drawbridges, a threat of bathos. This threat, alas, is realized with the abandonment of the principle that x must be a personal name. First it is relaxed to permit place names, which is bad enough.

\exists (Egypt)?
Egypt a bit off my best china plate
and the grotesque
 \exists (Amsterdam)?
Amsterdam is like plum jam, but made from hamsters, which is an offence against logic, taste and the classical canons.

Finally, my word or phrase may replace x, which permits every kind of debauchery and heinousness:

\exists (Illegals)?
Illegals stay in the nest until they feel better
or
 \exists (Dishwasher)?
Dishwasher the way I spoke before I had false teeth.

In an even worse outburst of mummie, the responsibility for laying down the pun is placed on the questioner, who must therefore, frighteningly, be assumed to know the answer already: he is manipulated, willy-nilly, into asking Seth who, Cook who, Noah who, Hawaii who, and even, unforgivably, Ode-lay-ee Who?

Be assured that standards have not fallen so low everywhere. In my own laboratory, we are at present working on many new projects, especially the reversed, Hungarian (Nagy-Nagy) or Chinese Knock joke. A specimen will suffice.

Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Kuan-Yew.
Who (or which) Kuan-Yew?
O-Sei Kuan-Yew See by the dawn's early light...

In brief

The kindest way of defining a kelpie is to call it a mischievous water spirit which assumes various shapes (without adding that one of them is likely to be a horse which delights in drowning its riders). The first four manifestations of the spirit in the children's series of that name from the Edinburgh publishing firm of Canongate are all by well-known authors. In age the books range from the twenty-nine year old *The Hill of the Red Fox* by Allan Campbell McLean (223pp. £1.95, 0 86241 055 X) – a thriller involving espionage on Skye – to George Mackay Brown's *Six Lives of Fankle the Cat* (121pp. £1.50, 0 86241 058 4), first published in 1980. Fankle's extra lives have already been lived, among pirates and in Persia and other places, and he tells the story of his life to Jenny, his owner.

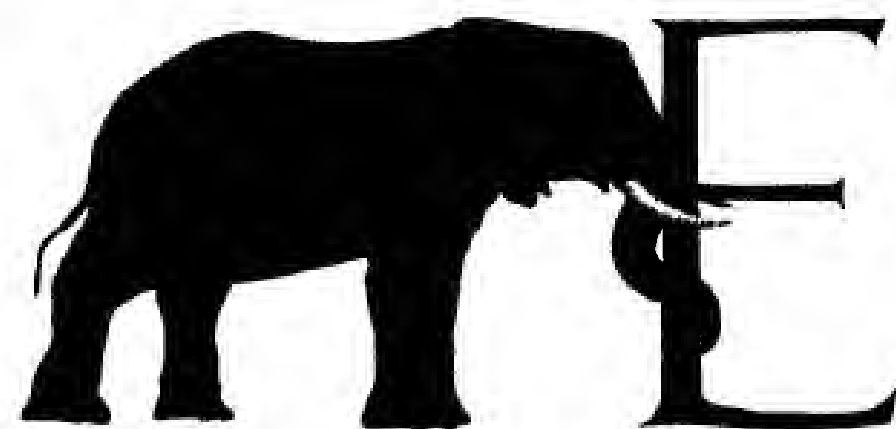
The two other titles chosen to begin the series which was launched in response to a correspondence in the *Scotsman* in which authors, librarians and others bemoaned the dearth of good Scottish children's books, are Mollie Hunter's *The Spanish Letters* (173pp. £1.75, 0 86241 057 6), a swashbuckling tale first published in 1964 involving what the TLS reviewer called a "sixteenth-century Junior Richard Hannay", and *The Desperate Journey* by Kathleen Fidler (157pp. £1.60, 0 86241 056 8), from the same year, involving a family of crofters in nineteenth-century Sutherland, the Murrays, forced off their land during the Highland Clearances. Dave, Kirsty and their parents first move to the wastes of Glasgow (slums) and then to the wastes of Canada (Red River), where nice English-speaking Indians teach Dave how to use a bow and arrow, and the family build a log cabin named after their Highlandcroft. More kelpies, for nine to fourteen-year-olds, are forthcoming. J. C.

ERIC HILL. *Spot's Busy Year*. 0 434 94303 7. *Spot's Alphabet*. 0 434 94299 5. *Spot Tells the Time*. 0 434 94301 0. *Spot's Learning to Count*. 0 434 94302 9. Heinemann. 75p each. Four colouring books with a minimal text and alternate full-colour illustrations. The characters are familiar from *Where's Spot* and its successors.

JAN PIENKOWSKI. *ABC Colouring Book*. 0 14 050456 7 and *123 Colouring Book* Puffin. £1.25 each. Large format colouring books which will form part of Pienkowski's "Nursery Books" series.

BETSY MAESTRO and ELLEN DEL VECCHIO. *Big City Port*. Illustrated by Gullio Maestro. Hippo. £1.25. 0 590 70319 5. First published in 1983. A simplified but realistic explanation in words and pictures of the operations of a modern city port. The bold pictures show with satisfying clarity the tugs, tankers, pleasure boats and liners which use the New York docks.

BYRON BARTON. *Building a House*. 0 00 662265 8. *Airport*. 0 00 662264 X. Picture Lions. £1.25 each. First published 1981 and 1982. Bold poster-style pictures and simple texts explain the most basic practicalities of house-building and what goes on in an airport. These books should go a long way towards satisfying the craving for facts that the very young often manifest.



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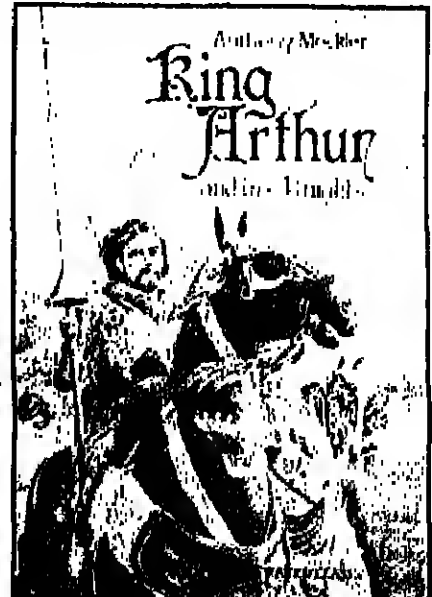
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Illustrated by Nick Harris

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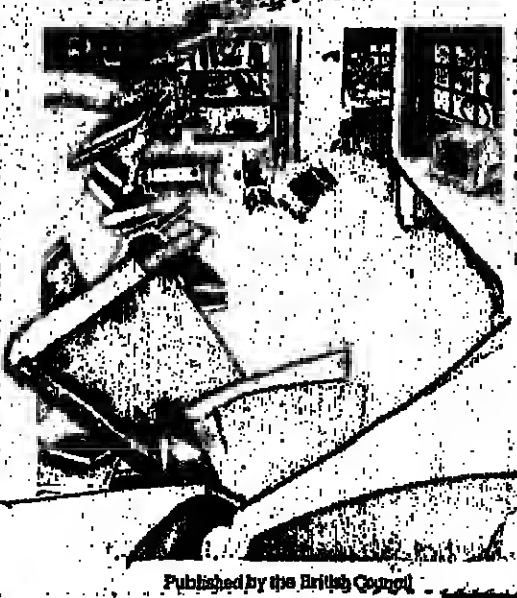
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Into your dreams she waltzes, strung with starlight and music, a marionette.

They say it's a nude witch dancing her rings though it looks like a lolloping hare.
Circling the firm, like a full moon circling the globe, and leaning to stare
Bridge-eyed in at the midnight window down at the sleeping children there.

Something scares me about a hare, like seeing an escapee
From a looney-bin, lurching and loping along in his flapping pyjamas, free—
Or meeting a woman mad with religion who has fastened her eyes on me.

You'll never hurt a hare after you've heard her cry in pain
A mother's scream, a baby's scream, and a needle slips through your ear and brain
To prick and prick your heart when you hear of the hurt of a hare again.

Matters of form

Eric Korn

GYLES BRANDRETH

1000 Knock-Knocks: the most ridiculous
knock-knock book ever known
208pp. Carousel. £1.25.
055254249 0

In the interests of precision, brevity and pedantry we need a symbol for the conventional joke formula, as represented by the following paradigm:
Knock. Knock.
Who's there?
Wyslan.
Wyslan Who?
Wyslan civilization is indeed in trouble if in times of crisis it cannot produce anything profounder than the knock-knock joke.

In this review I shall use the existential quantifier $\exists(x)$, which will here have the extended sense "there is (at least one) x such that x is knocking at the door and x is uttering the proposition 'my name is x '. This, naturally, begs a number of questions: is the assertion true? is "the knocker's name" the knocker's name? is there a sense in which, etc etc. For further discussion, see my forthcoming *Ontological Knock, or Descartes en dehors*, if not before *dehors*. Meanwhile, the first four lines of any knock-knock joke may be represented by the lucid expression " $\exists(x):?$ ".

The modern representative of the form is very different from the Pukelithic clonks I grew up with. Here is a state-of-the-art specimen from Gyles Brandreth:

\exists (Dmitri)?
Dmitri is where lamb chops grow.
Similarly classical in form but sophisticated in execution is
 \exists (Thérèse)?

Thérèse many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.
Gyles Brandreth has not ignored the pioneers. Here are gathered all our old friends, Oscar, Victor, Ferdie and Lydia, to name but four, representatives of those fine old families the Stupid-Questions, the Hiss-Trousers, the Lass-Times and the Teapots. (Alas, Lydia Teapot, more formally Lydia Teapots-Missin, has a vulgar rival here, the proletarian Lydia Dustbins-Blown-Away. Mr Brandreth should really have invited only one of them.) But no matter, here are the lovely Misses Tew, Gladys E. Tew and Alice N. Tew (of Alice N. Tew & Ulysses N. Mee), and here is Fletcher. Just plain

Fletcher, Brandreth calls him, though most of us call him *Darling Hugh* Fletcher.

\exists (Fletcher)?
Fletcher Self Gai.

Music for the party is provided by Vera (all the flowers gone), Hannah (partridge in a pear tree) and the well-loved - and well-known - duo Sam and Janet Evening.

But

\exists (Lucinda)?
Lucinda Sky With Diamonds
though evocative, seems a little underhand, and
 \exists (Rapunzel)?
Rapunzel troubles in your old kit-bag

is decided evidence of a rat creeping in, a lowering of standards and drawbridges, a threat of bathos. This threat, alas, is realized with the abandonment of the principle that x must be a personal name. First it is relaxed to permit place names, which is bad enough.

\exists (Egypt)?
Egypt a bit off my best china plate
and the grotesque
 \exists (Amsterdam)?
Amsterdam is like plum jam, but made from hamsters which is an offence against logic, taste and the classical canon.

Finally, any word or phrase may replace x , which permits every kind of delinquency and heinousness:

\exists (Illegal)?
Illegals stay in the nest until they feel better
or
 \exists (Dishwasher)?
Dishwasher the way I spoke before I had false teeth.

In an even worse outburst of anomic, the responsibility for laying down the pun is placed on the questioner, who must therefore, frighteningly, be assumed to know the answer already, he is manipulated, willy-nilly, into asking Seth who, Cook who, Noah who, Hawaii who, and even, unforgivably, Ode-lay-ee Who?

Be assured that standards have not fallen so low everywhere. In my own laboratory, we are at present working on many new projects, especially the reversed, Hungarian (Nagy-Nagy) or Chinese Knock joke. A specimen will suffice.

Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Kuan-Yew.
Who (or which) Kuan-Yew?
O-Sei Kuan-Yew See by the dawn's early light.

In brief

The kindest way of defining a kelpie is to call it a mischievous water spirit which assumes various shapes (without adding that one of them is likely to be a horse which delights in drowning its riders). The first four manifestations of the spirit in the children's series of that name from the Edinburgh publishing firm of Canongate are all by well-known authors. In age the books range from the twenty-nine year old *The Hill of the Red Fox* by Allan Campbell McLean (223pp. £1.95. 0 86241 055 X) - a thriller involving espionage on Skye - to George Mackay Brown's *Six Lives of Fankle the Cat* (121pp. £1.50. 0 86241 058 4), first published in 1980. Fankle's extra lives have already been lived, among pirates and in Persia and other places, and he tells the story of his life to Jenny, his owner.

The two other titles chosen to begin the series which was launched in response to a correspondence in the *Scotsman* in which authors, librarians and others bemoaned the dearth of good Scottish children's books, are *Mollie Hunter's The Spanish Letters* (173pp. £1.75. 0 86241 057 6), a swashbuckling tale first published in 1964 involving what the *TLS* reviewer called a "sixteenth-century Junior Richard Hannay", and *The Desperate Journey* by Kathleen Fidler (157pp. £1.60. 0 86241 056 8), from the same year, involving a family of crofters in nineteenth-century Suiterland, the Murrays, forced off their land during the Highland Clearances. Dave, Kirsty and their parents first move to the wastes of Glasgow (slums) and then to the wastes of Canada (Red River), where nice English-speaking Indians teach Dave how to use a bow and arrow, and the family build a log cabin named after their Highlandcroft. More kelpies, for nine to fourteen-year-olds, are forthcoming. J. C.

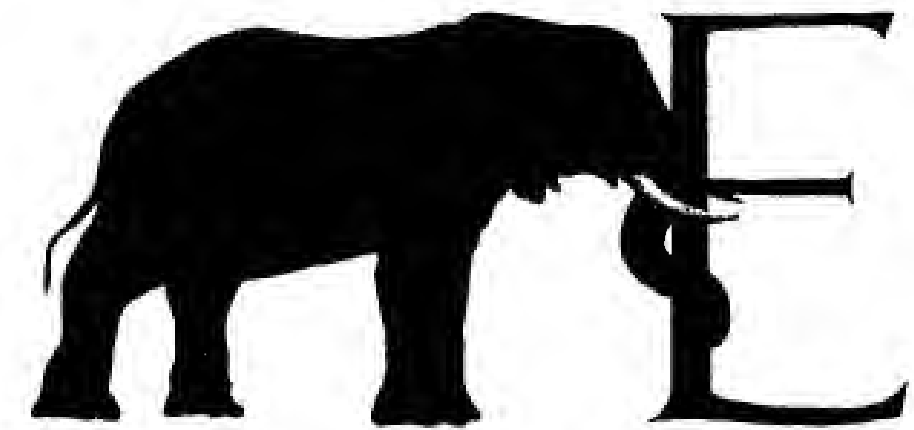
ERIC HILL. *Spot's Busy Year*. 0 434 94303 7. *Spot's Alphabet*. 0 434 94299 5. *Spot Tells the Time*. 0 434 94301 0. *Spots Learns to Count*. 0 434 94302 9. Heinemann. 75p each. Four colouring books with a minimal text and alternate full-colour illustrations. The characters are familiar from *Where's Spot* and its successors.

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MICHAEL RUSSEN. *How to get out of the bath... and other problems*. Illustrated by Graham Round. Hippo. £2.50. 0 590 70299 8. First published in 1984. An anarchic, humorously intended activities book, which provides jokes, rhymes, doodles, cartoons, opportunities for graffiti and sketches of various comic disasters; all along the lines of "How Do you get out of the bath?" "Well!"



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Kenneth O. Morgan

ROY BURRELL
The Oxford Children's History
Volume 1: Earliest Times to the Last Stuarts
368pp. Oxford University Press. £9.95.
019181861

PETER and MARY SPEED
The Oxford Children's History
Volume 2: The Making of the Modern Age
368pp. Oxford University Press. £9.95.
01918187X

Writing history for adults need not be unduly complicated. There are readily intelligible source materials; there are few problems of methodology or of language; grown-up readers can readily understand the sequential nature of history if only because they, too, have a past. As Gibbon remarked, history is the most popular kind of writing because it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. History for children, however, is a far more hazardous and demanding enterprise, much too serious a business to be left to mere historians. For younger children, it is most complicated and difficult of all. To engage the interest and imagination of a young child in remote events and persons long dead, while keeping a distinction between legend and established fact, fairy stories, folk memories and verifiable record, is a challenge before which many have floundered. Yet the need remains, and the passion for history in our schools (despite the recent endorsement of the subject by Sir Keith Joseph) remains undimmed. This new two-volume *Oxford Children's History*, therefore, is most welcome as a courageous and ambitious attempt to provide a continuous survey of the past two thousand years, not exactly of British history but of history from the British point of view. There is an abundance of superb illustrative material in vivid colour — drawings, photographs, graphs, maps, the occasional strip cartoon — which are genuine aids to the text and carefully integrated with it. There is no foreword to explain the object of the enterprise, but it would seem that children of the eight to eleven age-group are the intended readers for the first volume and slightly older children for the second. Each will be avidly read and treasured by the new generation of would-be historians for many years to come.

The first volume is a total success. In a series of lively sketches, brisk accounts are offered of the major developments in British history from the prehistoric Celts down to the Glorious Revolution (still so named) in 1688. Roy Burrell's method is to intersperse factual summaries on social, political, religious or cultural developments, with interviews with such varied personalities as Roman legionaries, the compilers of Domesday Book, or the rival supporters in the English Civil War. In addition, a successful technique is to provide accounts of a typical "life in the day" of a medieval baron, a peasant threatened by the Black Death, a Tudor merchant or whomever. The treatment is businesslike and unsentimental. King Alfred,

for instance, appears as a law maker and educationalist, rather than in the context of those tiresome cakes. The Spanish Armada is discussed in terms of naval strategy rather than of Drake's leisure-time interests. The effects are invariably well-judged, and the information deftly packaged to meet the remorselessly sceptical demands of a young child. Only perhaps at the end, where a neat account of Wren's church-building leads on to four attractive but inadequately signposted pages on Stuart art and architecture, without guidance to the young reader as to what he or she is being shown, does the level seem a trifle inappropriate. On balance, though, the book is most effective, imaginative, colourful in every sense, with a pacy narrative (a strip cartoon takes us swiftly through thirteenth and fourteenth-century politics from Henry III to Edward III) and always a joy to handle. For a lucid, attractive guide to earlier British history to stimulate younger children, this book could hardly be bettered.

Peter and Mary Speed have a far more difficult task of compression and interpretation in taking British history from the early eighteenth century down to 1982 (or so it would appear, since in Volume 1 the good ship Mary Rose remains firmly on the sea bottom). As noted above, the authors seem to aim at a somewhat older age-group; by the same token, their success may be a shade less complete. The use of the interview technique here seems rather more forced. While the unscribed views of, say, a medieval serf or an eighteenth-century yeoman farmer seem natural enough, the idea of such a communication from Sir Edward Grey on the causes of war in 1914, Beveridge on his White Paper of 1942, and (most improbably of all) Molotov on Russian foreign policy after 1945, may strain a child's credulity. The approach is more thematic and less chronological than in the first volume. Thus, from the end of the Napoleonic Wars, successive chapters deal with transport and exploration from early ocean liners to the conquest of Everest; school and work from Dickensian schools to North Sea oil; home life and leisure from the Victorian music-hall down to the age of the cinema; the countryside up to entry into the Common Market; and "the People and their Rights" from the Victorian poor to recent immigrants (Italians rather than blacks, oddly enough). The effect of this on a child trying to gain an overall sense of what it might have been like to live in, say, Edwardian Britain, cannot but be confusing. Again, the last six chapters advance from purely British history to a survey of international developments — Hitler's Germany, Khrushchev's Russia, Mao's China, Nehru's India and Kennedy's America. At the very least, children will be left asking questions about the histories prior to 1918 of these nations into whose affairs they are belatedly thrust.

The emphasis, no doubt correctly, is on social history — the early chapters on new technical improvements in agriculture, industry and transport; later ones on welfare policy and family life are excellently done. But the exclu-

sion of any treatment of politics, and the concentration on the impersonal, synoptic view, are overdue. History is certainly not about charts, at least in this version. Readers of Volume 1 were variously introduced to Alfred, William the Conqueror, More, Cromwell, even a monkish chronicler like Jocelyn of Brakelonde. Children reading Volume 2, however, learn about the campaigns of two world wars without being told of the existence of Lloyd George (who appears unidentified in a painting of the Treaty of Versailles) or Winston Churchill. They hear of Kosygin and Herbert Hoover but not Gidstone and Disraeli. They read of votes for women but not for men. Wales and Scotland are forgotten; the Celts, indeed, are left safely in their wooden hill-forts warshipping their tribal gods in prehistoric times. Finally, it is regrettable that some of the themes emphasized in Volume 1 disappear from view thereafter, and that the two volumes are left unconnected. On the other hand, among the second volume's many merits are a full and fair-minded treatment of recent Com-

monwealth and colonial history. The handling of such explosive matters as the comparative living standards of different social classes in the industrial age, law and order, sexual and racial discrimination, or Britain's relationship to Ireland and Europe is balanced and discriminating. In such a volume, the section on the physical rigours of "wasliday" through the ages is a stroke of genius. There are very few factual errors, although the account of the state of British industry in 1891, given by a "Lancashire cotton manufacturer" seems unduly bullish, given Britain's perceived commercial and industrial difficulties then. The total of unemployed workers in America in 1939, while serious enough, was far less than the 13 million slugged here.

Despite these qualifications, both volumes deserve a very wide readership as superbly designed and admirably comprehensive attempts to introduce younger children, just launching out into the world of books and fighting free from the octopod embrace of Blyton, to the essence of their society and its past.

A sense of change

Tim Halliday

GRAHAM UNDERHILL
Out of the Wood
32pp. Oxford University Press. £5.95.
019273153X

A single thousand-year-old oak tree has been a passive witness to changes in its immediate surroundings whose scale and variety are experienced by many generations of humans. The very different viewpoint on historical change that its longevity affords is explored, in words and pictures, in this attractive book. We begin in 850 AD when a jay buries but fails to retrieve an acorn and proceed, as the young oak grows, through a series of changes in land use and historical events, such as the Black Death, to the late nineteenth century, when the oak, finally felled by a storm, is cut up for timber and made into furniture. The book ends with contemporary children planting an acorn, initiating the next thousand year cycle.

This format makes one point very vividly, that what we like to think of as natural countryside is nothing of the sort. The natural history of Britain has been completely transformed several times by human activities. Gone are the

natural forests that once covered most of Britain and with them wild boar, bears and wolves. Most oak trees now stand as solitary and isolated remnants of ancient woodlands, admired and preserved for their individual grandeur. The oak in this book, initially part of a dense forest teeming with wildlife, then of a woodland methodically and intensively managed and exploited by humans, finally becomes an ornamental feature of the parkland surrounding a stately home.

Graham Underhill's illustrations have a distinctly Pre-Raphaelite look, with their attention to detail, rather contrived composition and foreshortened perspective. The plants and animals are beautifully painted with a fine rendering of texture and light. The human figures, however, are rather wooden and lifeless. This is an appealing book which, in a subtle and entertaining way, conveys a particular sense of historical change that is not achieved in more conventional history books. By describing the oak tree's relationship with both people and wildlife, the author also neatly emphasizes the point that the human species has an intimate and complex relationship with the rest of nature. While we modify and exploit our environment, we remain totally dependent on it.

The sum and its parts

Jennifer Creer

Two recent series for pre-readers try to prove that learning can be fun. Kastrel's "Maths-pops" by Ray Marshall and Korky Paul aim to teach the mathematical concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division by making use of currently popular paper engineering techniques. Each small-format book is devoted to a single numerical skill with a

separate calculation on each double-page spread. The answer is always given in the form of a "pop-out", which contains items depicted in the question together with the numerical answer (for example, 2 owls + 1 owl = 3 owls). Lively cartoon-style pictures incorporate things likely to appeal to children; mice, frogs, soldiers, bananas. This humorous approach does not really lend itself to the teaching of simple mathematical principles and the "pop-out" pictures are more distracting than informative. The books might help a slow learner by presenting information in a more varied manner but the style and design are too simple to appeal to children over five.

Zebra Books' "First Math" series is issued with four slim volumes, each purporting to cover a different mathematical skill. The pictures are clear and brightly coloured with minimal obtrusive detail to distract the reader from the matter in hand. In *Counting* various items are added to a monster's outline to give it form and feature: each in association with a clear written number (2 two eyes; 3 three horns, etc.). *Odd One Out* uses the same monster. *Shapes* presents too much information each page and in a confusing manner: small children will find it difficult to appreciate the association of shapes — sphere = balloon, square = apron, rectangle = a tray. *Big and Little*, though often entertaining, fails, as perhaps any picture book must, to convey the ideas of fast, slow, soft and hard.

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Myths and myth-makers

S. S. Prawer

JOHN M. ELLIS
One Fairy Story Too Many: The Brothers Grimm and Their Tales
214pp. University of Chicago Press. £14.85.
0226205460

As late as 1974 Ions and Peter Opie, in *The Classic Fairy Tales*, felt able to speak of the Brothers Grimm as "the first to write the tales down in the way ordinary people told them, and not attempt to improve them". Evidence to the contrary had been piling up for years, leading Richard M. Dorson, for instance, to speak of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* as "that celebrated but misguided enterprise". The Opies seem to have been uneasily aware that something was amiss — witness asides like "They did not always adhere to the high standards they set themselves" — but it is only now, after the publication of John M. Ellis's timely book, that the full evidence of what the Brothers Grimm really did has become available to English-speaking readers. German readers have had the relevant documents before them for some time; but all too many of them were so blinded by preconceptions fostered by the Grimms themselves that they failed to draw the full conclusions towards which the evidence pointed. There can be no doubt, now, that far from gathering their tales from the lips of peasants, domestic servants and the like, the Grimms used mainly educated, middle-class informants from their own region of Hesse, along with printed sources from further afield. Their description of one of their principal informants, the famous "Märchenfrau" portrayed by Ludwig Grimm and more recently by Maurice Sendak, would seem to be deliberately misleading. Dorothea was not the simple German "Bäuerin" the Grimms sought to depict: she was literate, middle-class (though déclassée by poverty), of Huguenot provenance, with French (not German) as her first language. She clearly knew her Perrault, and cannot therefore have been the unsullied folk-source of traditional Germanic mythology that the Grimms presented.

Worse is to come. The Grimms destroyed all the manuscripts they had used when preparing the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, a strange proceeding for antiquaries and folklorists who professed reverence for the material they had received from their informants. A copy of some of these manuscripts, however, had been sent to Clemens Brentano, who failed to return it and among whose papers it later turned up. Even here one cannot be sure that we have the material directly as it came from the informants; but a comparison of these early manuscripts with what eventually appeared in the first edition of the Grimms' collection reveals large discrepancies which Professor Ellis shows up in welcome detail. He also demonstrates, as several earlier critics have done, that Wilhelm Grimm materially changed and elaborated the tales from one edition to the next. Ellis's analysis of some of these changes shows clearly that they affect, not only the style, but also the narrative substance of the tales — events, characters, motivation and theme.

We can sum up the typical relationship between the Grimms' source material and the texts which they printed as follows. First, the source material is completely recast and rewritten, and heavily elaborated, the result commonly being a doubling in length. Second, this process has totally destroyed the style and flavour of the original, the resulting tone being the creation of the brothers themselves. Third, any sense of the "voice" of the original story-tellers is completely obliterated in this process.

The changes Ellis examines in detail reveal deliberate moralizing, alterations of psychologically important substance, and the introduction, into the revised later versions, of elements of violence and cruelty not present in the earlier ones. He demonstrates that "in successive prefaces — but especially in the one Wilhelm Grimm wrote for the first edition — the Grimms deliberately deceived their readers: they are proved disingenuous in their accounts of informants, and in statements like 'No particular has been either added through our own poetic reagination, or improved and altered.' He suggests further that the Romantic nationalism and populism which dictated

the Grimms' misleading prefaces so befogged some later German critics that they were unable to interpret correctly the damning evidence they had themselves unearthed. The critical approbrium directed against Macpherson's "Ossian" versions, Ellis maintains, might with greater justice at least to the Grimms' "tales for children and the household", and while agreeing that this collection "presents two hundred tales that are both charming and full of interest", he asks us to "dispense with that added fairy tale with which they launched the collection — it is altogether one too many".

It appears, then, that Ellis does not set out to challenge the intrinsic fascination of these tales. That is only as it should be: for while Macpherson's "Ossian" is a historical curiosity not likely to be read for pleasure nowadays by anyone but specialists, the Grimms' tales have been and will be enjoyed by generations of readers who care nothing about Germanic mythology, peasant or middle-class informants, philological accuracy or misleading prefaces. And while one cannot but agree that Ellis has made out his case, some of us would have liked him at least to mention facts that do not wholly chime in with his principal contentions. He upbraids the Grimms for the "peasant" status of Dorothea Vielmann and "die alte Marie"; but he says nothing at all about Juliane Friedrich Knuse, a retired NCO from whom the most vivid soldiers' tales in the collection derive and whose non-intellectual, sub-middle-class status is touchingly revealed by the phonetically spelled letter of July 26, 1823 in which he asks his benefactors, the Grimms, for the gift of a cast-off pair of trousers. There are also times when one feels that awkward facts which are mentioned receive a less than generous commentary. Take the following comments on a passage in the Grimms' "The Frog-King, or Iron Henry":

In this tale, a little girl meets a frog who turns into a handsome prince, whom she marries. So far, this might sound like a "beauty and the beast" story, but the little girl here behaves abominably towards the frog, and it is an act of violence (she throws him against the wall in a fit of rage) which turns him back into his real self, not any generosity toward him. How, then, does the little girl deserve her prince, or her tranquil future with him? The Grimms were perhaps more concerned with some kinds of moral questions than with others.

The Grimms may surely be given credit for their sensitivity to the psychological import and meaning of the story they here retell — the story of a girl growing up, struggling against paternal decrees, against what seems like a violation of her privacy, against a sexuality which at first appears loathsome but is later found to be surprisingly beautiful, enriching and comforting.

At this she really got furious, picked him up and hurled him against the wall as hard as she could, saying: "Now you'll sleep, you horrid frog." But when he dropped to the floor he was no longer a frog, but a prince with beautiful gentle eyes; and he, at her father's wish, became her dear companion and husband.

Let us, by all means, heed Professor Ellis's demonstrations of the Grimms' sleights of hand — no scholar, indeed, can afford to neglect them; but let us also continue to enjoy the works of art the Brothers launched into the world, and not worry too much or too constantly about their provenance and status!

The twenty-first Bologna Children's Book Fair will be held from April 5 to 8. The theme of the fair this year is "The child and the computer, a challenge for publishers". There will be exhibitions devoted to computer software, including the demonstration of educational and information programmes by Intelin, French, American and British companies. Leisure software and computer games will also be presented. Companies such as Iret-Apple, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Atari and Olivetti will be demonstrating their range of machines and hardware and there will be a display of specialized magazines and computer periodicals. Publishers will be demonstrating electronic books and leisure software and a "soft" artist, expert in electronic graphics, music software and expressive teaching will display his skills. One day will be given over to lectures, seminars and discussions on computer technology and its implications.

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Fact and fantasy: German children's books

Sybil Schönfeldt

German children's books are particularly difficult to characterize. Since the Second World War about 40 per cent of the books published in Germany, Austria or Switzerland have been translations, and about two-thirds of these translations from English. Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie are among the most popular and best-selling authors, but books by Joan Aiken, Judith Kerr and Roald Dahl are also well known, as are the familiar classics of children's literature - Mary Poppins, Winnie the Pooh, Mowgli and Alice. *The Hobbit* was translated in 1957 and E. Nesbit's *Arden* stories appeared in 1959 and 1960. These fantasy stories have therefore been accessible in German for over twenty years, but they were not immediately popular. They had appeared too soon for public taste, and were found to be too English.

The right moment came in October 1978. *Der kleine Hobbit* appeared on the *Spiegel* list of best sellers, the first children's book to do so. *The Lord of the Rings* a year later, and they have never entirely left it. The books set a national fashion, and influenced German children's books as hardly any other books had done before. In 1980, the first German fantasy story for children, Michael Ende's huge *Unendliche Geschichte* (*The Neverending Story*, reviewed in the *TLS* on November 25, 1983), went straight to the top of the list of best sellers. These books started something else new in Germany: they made adults read children's books. Ende's book went through eight printings in the first year, printed editions were on sale, in university towns in particular, and every newspaper, every chat-show discussed Ende. Some said that two generations were catching up on the fairy-tales which they had missed during the years of the war and of the economic miracle. Alternatively, perhaps, both children and adults need an endless story about a small, fat boy with glasses who, when the land of Phantásien is threatened with total annihilation, saves it for its child Empress by making it come into existence again, entirely by his own power of imagination. The generation without a future evidently needs the consolation of stories in which life has a meaning, stories in which a perfectly ordinary boy with no heroic characteristics is able to cope with real problems when others fail to do so.

Ende's success encouraged German publishers, and they started to bring out books that were as fantastic and as long as Ende's 430-page story. The publisher Hörder produced another "Schmöker", as big fat books are called in German, *Der weisse Wolf* (The White Wolf) by Käthe Reiche (351 pages). This tells the story of three children of three different nationalities who wander through a Forbidden Land, and survive incredible dangers to overcome the Evil Ones and restore peace. *Märchenmond* (Fairy-tale Moon) by Wolfgang and Heike Hohlbaum: (395 pages). It is a highly coloured and gripping story about Kim who has to fight his way through to the land of Märchenmond. The last and best example is

last year's *Stein und Flöte* (Stone and Flute) (818 pages) by Hans Bemmman, a well-known translator of English and American stories. The setting is the timeless world of deep forests, mighty castles with enchantresses who can turn themselves into falcons and wolves, but the boy Lauscher with his magic flute is also the hero of a classic *Entwicklungsroman*.

Until recently there were relatively few books which dealt with the Nazi period. My own book *Sonderappell* (Emergency Call-up), which was published in 1979, is an account in fictional form of the last months of the



The small Olympian bear, one of Helen Oxenbury's illustrations to *The Quangle Wangle's Hat* by Edward Lear (Helmchen, £5.95, 0 434 93596), which is reissued this month.

Relchgarbeltsdienst, the German Labour Service and the collapse at the end of the war. I wanted to record for my sons what it was like but most people asked me whether it was really necessary to drag these stories into the light again. Then *Holocaust* was seen on television, and almost immediately the subject of the repressed past was in vogue, publishers began accepting stories of this kind. Most of them were autobiographical: Elisabeth Höfer's childhood in Vienna in *Nora*, for example, or the Berlin of Klaus Kordon's *Einer wie Frank* (Someone like Frank). Particularly moving, and reminiscent of the best African stories of Doris Lessing, is Stefanie Zweig's *Ein Mundvoll Erde* (A Mouthful of Earth), the story of a man who escapes from Hitler to Africa but never ceases to feel a stranger there, while his daughter makes friends with Africans and finds a real home in the wilderness; until the end of the war, when she has to return to Germany.

However, German children's books are not only concerned with fantasy and the recent past. Publishers have just discovered the very young reader and there are a number of series in which several authors have written particularly witty and poetic texts for small children, all

of them illustrated. Recent examples are Irina Korschunow's *Der Findefuchs* (The Fender Fox), who loses his mother and finds a new family, or Paul Maar's *Die vergessene Tür* (The Forgotten Door), through which father and children together find their way into the happy land of childhood.

There are always far too few humorous books for children. Fortunately in recent years a few authors have appeared who have managed to strike a more light-hearted note. Margret Rettich, one of the best German illustrators, has begun to tell stories from her own village environment, *Wirklich wahre Geschichten* (Really True Stories). Simon and Desi Ruge have developed a totally original, fresh and impudent narrative style in *Katze mit Hut* (The Cat and its Hat). Hilke Raddatz illustrates her own extraordinary stories like *Der Erpresser von Bockenheim* (The Blackmailer of Bockenheim), which is about a very fat dog in which every child will recognize a boy who has been fattened up by his mother and turned into a monster. This story exemplifies the desire of many authors to make children more aware of themselves and others. Children's books are seen as a weapon against the isolation which often leads to violence. The popular Austrian author, Erwin Moser, for example, tells idyllic stories, full of life from cats, mice and people, such as *Der Mond hinter den Scheunen* (The Moon behind the Barns) but his real achievement has been to portray children as members of society and to challenge them to behave accordingly. In his *Grossvater-Geschichten* (Grandfather Stories) he depicts the ideal but not always easy situation of generations living together. There is a wave of interest in the subject of old age and death, and relationships with grandparents are a frequently recurring theme.

Writers of stories for adolescents on the other hand are definitely expected to deal with the problems of the present day. Three successful authors, who do not only write for children are Max von der Grün whose *Die Vorstadtkrokodile* (The Suburban Crocodiles) is the story of a disabled boy, Peter Härtling whose *Ben liebt Anna* (Ben loves Anna) is about first love, and Gudrun Pausewang whose *Die Not der Familie Caldera* (The Distress of the Caldera Family) is about poverty in South America; her *Die letzten Kinder von Schewenborn* (The Last Children of Schewenborn) describes an atomic bomb attack and its consequences in a village in Hesse. There would also appear to be a growing interest in conservation and the environment. The first factual books have recently appeared, and Jörg Steiner and Jörg Müller's novel *Die Eisblumenwald* (The Ice Forest), in which some children take an iceberg from the Pole to the thirsty desert and succeed in planting a wood, is at the top of the best-seller lists.

German children's books are now, on the whole, of higher quality than ever before, not least because of their internationalism and the possibilities of comparison which this affords. Great progress has been made over the past five years and the range is now rich in themes, ideas and styles.

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Children's Books and the Chocolate Factory, a one-day conference on the marketing of children's books, organized by the Children's Book Circle took place on February 14. A report on the conference is now available from Helen Trisk, The Bodley Head, 9 Bow Street, London WC1, price £5.

The winner of the 1984 Guardian Award for children's fiction has just been announced. The award was won by *The Sheep-Pig* by Dick King-Smith, illustrated by Mary Rayner (Gollancz). Jill Paton Walsh was awarded the *Universal Literary Prize for A Parcel of Patterns* (Kestrel). The winner of the 1983 Kurt Mascher Award is Anthony Browne's *Gorilla* (Julia MacRae).

Letters

'The Sinking of the Belgrano'

Sir, - Lawrence Freedman (March 9) demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that the War Cabinet could not have known the terms of the Peruvian peace initiative until after the Belgrano was sunk. He knows, what anyone who worked during the Second World War in military or naval intelligence knows, how long it takes for intelligence to be gathered, deciphered, deciphered, transmitted, evaluated and finally brought to bear on operations, either by modifying or reinforcing plans already being implemented.

Arthur Gavshon and Desmond Rice (Letters, March 23) ask whether British governments are to subordinate themselves to the military logic of their Chiefs of Staff and allow the Chiefs "to transcend the judgments of democratically elected leaders". At no time did this happen. The democratically elected members of Parliament on both Conservative and Labour benches destroyed in 1980 Nicholas Ridley's proposals for settlement of the issue. Both sides overwhelmingly endorsed the dispatch of the Task Force to retake the islands if peace initiatives failed. Mr. Inigo's peace initiative did fail; and immediately the Argentine forces attacked British vessels, and the War Cabinet similarly authorized attacks.

If the authors' rhetoric means anything, it means that the Prime Minister should have taken command of the Task Force herself and decided what each individual commander should do. The Prime Minister may have recalled the lessons of the botched operation of Suez and determined to do no such thing. Once the shooting began, it was for the naval and military commanders to implement the policy of the War Cabinet. Quite rightly the Royal Navy was ordered to search out and destroy, if possible, the enemy's fleet.

After the Battle of Jutland the Germans won a propaganda victory; but the outcome of that battle was that the German High Seas Fleet never again left port. After the sinking of the Belgrano, the Argentine fleet never challenged the Task Force. Are the authors of this book seriously suggesting that after hostilities had already begun, the naval command should have been willing to see the Task Force cruise around the Falklands waiting for some fresh political initiative? Had they done so they would justly have been criticized for leaving it at the mercy of a pre-emptive strike.

NOEL ANKIN,
House of Lords, London SW1.

T. S. Eliot

Sir, - The poem which Matthew Evans (Letters, March 16) calls "The Love Song of St Sebastian" exists in a number of forms. And its textual correctness is by no means as cut and dried as he suggests. There is an untitled eighty-four-line poem, there is an untitled fifty-line poem, and there is a titled thirty-eight-line poem. These versions can be seen, variously, at the Huntington Library, McKel-din Library and New York Public Library. It is surprising Mr. Evans doesn't appear to know this. There are indeed variant drafts of unpublished Eliot poems in American universities; it might be helpful if Fabers were to allow reputable scholars to publish definitive textual attributions.

E. J. SAWYER,
30 Church Lane, London SW19.

Sir, - I offer the following as a supplement to the discussion in your columns of Michael Hastings's play *Tom and Viv*. This material appeared in an essay in the Fall/Winter 1975 issue of *Confrontation* (published by Long Island University) of which I am editor. The writer, Brigit O'Donovan, was T. S. Eliot's secretary for two years, from 1934 to 1936, and as she wrote in her memoirs she was in love with her boss. Therefore her view must be regarded as coming from the most sympathetic of observers. Yet a reader may discern in Ms O'Donovan's description an unwitting exposure of Eliot's reserve of coldness, a pattern of behaviour in the poet that must have resulted in humiliation and anguish for his first wife.

In 1975 Ms O'Donovan wrote:
"I had after I began my job, I discovered that one of

my tasks was to deal with visits to the office by Mrs. (Vivienne) Eliot, from whom he was separated. I was given my instructions by the other secretaries. Not a word from him. The telephone would inform me that Mrs. Eliot was in the waiting room. I would ring TSE and he would thank me. I would go down and explain that it was not possible for Mrs. Eliot to see her husband, and that he was well. Mrs. Eliot, I now understand, suffered from schizophrenia, but at the time I had no idea what was the matter. She was a slight, pathetic, worried figure, badly dressed and very unhappy, her hands screwing up her handkerchief as she wept. It was a sad contrast from her busy, interested husband. Meanwhile TSE would be slipping down and out of the building. When I thought he had had enough time to get out, depending on what he was doing, I would try to bring the interview with Mrs. Eliot to an end. For the rest of the day Eliot would be on edge, talking even more slowly and hesitantly than usual, and we would keep our mutual contacts to a minimum.

The entire text of her essay is available from *Confrontation* magazine, English Department, C.W. Post College of Long Island University, Greenvale, New York 11548.

MARTIN TUCKER,
English Department, Long Island University,
Brooklyn, New York 11201.

'Spreading the Word'

Sir, - In my review (March 2) of Simon Blackburn's book *Spreading the Word* I briefly considered what reasons Blackburn might have for advocating a "projectivist" view of moral values, a view which takes our moral utterances to be expressive of our emotions and attitudes rather than as descriptive of mind-independent facts. I observed, as a preliminary, that such a view cannot be plausibly derived from the way we ordinarily treat moral sentences, because of their assertoric form and our habit of declaring them true or false; it would be different if they were overtly exclamatory or imperative or some such, in which case Blackburn's contrast would be marked on the surface of moral utterances. Not wishing to convict Blackburn of failing to appreciate this point, I noted that he acknowledges it (how could one not?). In his letter (March 16) Blackburn accuses me of making a "serious mistake" in attributing this recognition to him. I am perplexed by this accusation, and can only say that he does in several places have the good sense to make the point I attributed to him, for example: "Nobody denies that the surface phenomena of language - the fact that we use moral predicates, and apply truth and falsity to the judgements we make when we use them - pose a problem for projectivism" (p196). His insistence that I have seriously misunderstood him seems to derive from taking my words out of context and putting a quite unintended interpretation upon them.

Blackburn goes on to diagnose what he takes to be my mistake; he seems to think, for reasons that are obscure to me, that this stems from my adherence to a conception of the philosophy of language as solely concerned with "the internal study of the semantics of different constructions", which in turn reflects my "unusual and depressingly restrictive view of philosophy". I do not know how seriously I am supposed to take these remarks, but if they are intended to characterize how I think of philosophy then I can only say that everything I have ever written in philosophy, including my review of Blackburn, is fully couched in this characterization. Intended as a piece of sheer abuse, however, Blackburn's remarks strike me as entirely successful.

COLIN MCGINN,
Department of Philosophy, University College London,
Gower Street, London WC1.

Sidney's 'Old Arcadia'

Sir, - R. B. Alton (Letters, March 16) tells me that I am "not entitled" to refer to the Otley MS, which contains versions of some of the *Old Arcadia* poems. Since Otley and Phillips are uniquely in agreement at several points, for instance in line 23 of the long Ovidian *blason* OA 62, a poem discussed by Croft both in his paper and an appendix to it, I persist in considering it relevant to the question of the status of the Phillips text.

I persist, too, in finding Croft's account of how the Phillips manuscript may have been created extremely testing to my credulity. He tells us, of the manuscript: "mischievous"

embroideries (some of which are no more than added metaphors or synonyms), "it is not hard to imagine Harrington coming into the room where the scribe was at work, looking over his shoulder, and dictating them on the spot" (p 65).

For myself, I do find this hard to imagine, especially given the ineptitude of the scribes, on which we are all agreed, and given also the high incidence of lacunae, which neither Croft nor Alton mentions.

KATHERINE DUNCAN-JONES,
Somerville College, Oxford.

Sir, - The great length and venomous tone of R. E. Alton's letter (March 16) speak for themselves. While he rightly corrects the first of Katherine Duncan-Jones's four points about P. J. Croft's paper on the Phillips manuscript of the *Old Arcadia*, he has not dealt adequately with the rest of them. In particular he dismisses the relevance of the Otley manuscript. This does not merely contain "some poems in the *Arcadia*", but presents texts whose readings are also found in the Phillips MS alone. Any serious consideration of the Phillips MS must attempt to account for this: Croft and Alton fail to do so. Nor has Croft "conclusively demonstrated" that the Phillips MS belongs to the same family as the two MSS of *Orlando furioso*. In his paper Croft mentions the Boleian MS only in passing. It is left to Alton clearly to associate it with the scribal production of the Phillips and British Library MSS.

No one would deny that W. A. Ringer and Jeon Robertson are "great editors", but they are not infallible. Croft's paper and Alton's letter base themselves on the editors' belief that the "inventiveness" displayed in the Phillips MS is scribal. Perhaps their investigations into Sidney's texts could profitably be looked at again. As Croft himself says, "William Ringer would be the first to deprecate the notion that he has said the last word."

Croft's paper was called "Sir John Harrington's Manuscript of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*". While his discovery of the presence of Harrington's hand in the MS is of great potential interest and importance to Sidney scholars, he himself admits that the Phillips MS is not the one Harrington used, for quotations from Sidney in the Arundel-Harrington miscellany and his *Orlando furioso*. The significance of the Phillips MS from a textual point of view has been heightened by Croft's paper, but he has not solved all the problems the MS poses. Miss Duncan-Jones was fully justified in pointing this out.

H. R. WOODHUYSEN,
Department of English, University College London,
Gower Street, London WC1.

'Aristotle to Zoos'

Sir, - Richard Dawkins closes his review of the *McDawkins' Aristotle to Zoos: A Philosophical Dictionary* (March 9) by saying, "We are granted the pleasure of seeing in print (though much better expressed) the things that we would wish to say ourselves, if we dared: 'The biological works of Aristotle are a strange and generally speaking rather tiresome farrago of hearsay, imperfect observation, wishful thinking, and credulity amounting to downright gullibility.'"

Question: who are "we" such that "we" would wish to say this (yet dare not) and are granted this pleasure? I can assure your readers "we" includes one with the slightest understanding of the biological works of Aristotle, who will see, in the first entry of this book, a tiresome farrago of hearsay, imperfect (non-existent) observation, wishful (Popperian) thinking, and credulity amounting to downright gullibility. To show how silly the above quotation is (not just historically inaccurate - silly) would take a book. So before they get beyond "A" in this dictionary, I recommend to readers of the *TLS* David Balme's *Aristotle's De Paribus Animalium I and De Generatione Animalium I* (1972). This will provide them with a most readable translation of two important bits of Aristotle's biological works, and an accurate commentary on their meaning and historical significance.

JAMES G. LENNOX,
Centre for Hellenic Studies, 11001 Whitehaven
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COMMENTARY

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Flight from the feminine

Elizabeth Winter

N.Y. GOGOL
Marriage
Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith

Competition No 167
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than April 20. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 167" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on April 27.

1 Have you noticed the honeysuckle this morning?

2 Is your lover coming today?

3 What have you done with the scissors?

Competition No 163
Winner: Margaret Elliot
Answers:

1 Indeed, the brewhouse was a terrible place, which made one remember the worst that one had ever heard of Sweeney Todd.

When he entered it this afternoon, another tale came back to him, that one of his grandfather's workmen, who had worked in the brewhouse, had so soaked himself with spirits that at last, as Ellen said, "he took fire and burned all blue." There was nothing left of him but some black oil on the floor."

John Macfield, *The Midnight Folk*.

2 I remained more than a minute panting for breath, and then ventured to draw back the curtains of the bed – my mother was not there! but there appeared to be a black mass in the centre of the bed. I put my hand fearfully upon it – it was a sort of unctuous, plichy clinder.

Captain Marryat, *Jacob Faithful*, chapter 1.

3 Here is a small burnt patch of flooring; here is the tinder from a little bundle of burnt paper, but not so light as usual, seeming to be steeped in something; and here is – is it the cinder of a small shurled and broken log of wood sprinkled with white ashes, or is it coal? O horror, he is here! and this from which we run away, striking out the light and overturning one another into the street, is all that represents him.

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, chapter 32.

The St Petersburg audience at the first performance of *Morriage* in 1842 was bemused, the critics scathing. "It has no plot, no dénouement, no character, no wit, not even gaiety – and it's called a comedy!" ran a typically hostile notice. Belinsky wrote in a letter to a friend: "Gogol's onomies are having a field day". Shared Experience, directed by Mike Alfreds, bringing this episode "utterly incredible incident in two acts" to the Lyric Theatre in a remarkably faithful version (adapted by Mike Alfreds from a literal translation by Boris Isakov), have not only successfully exploited all the comic effects to the full in a vivacious, skilfully acted production, but have also introduced moments drawn from Gogol's own very specific world of nightmare.

Their intention is immediately revealed by making Pedkelyossin, the unwilling suitor in whose rooms the play opens, the double of Gogol himself. As the scene shifts from his bachelor pad to the home of the merchant's daughter, she and her aunt dash on to the darkened stage in beribboned, hooped undergarments, to flashing lights and ominous music, to introduce the "feminine touch" – uncovering garish cushions, scattering dazlingly coloured articles of clothing on the solid, highly polished furniture. Pedkelyossin's ambivalence about marriage – his attraction to it as an idea and his simultaneous horror – is brought sharply into focus by this nightmarish display of "femininity", one which is completely justified by a reading of Gogol's works. Nearly all his female characters (and they are fairly few and far between) are either moon-

facéd beauties or wily interfering old haridans. He himself never married.

The central episodes, where we remain in the exuberant world of farce, deal with the scheming matchmaker, Fyckla Ivanovna (Sandra Vee), a metley lot of fakers competing for the merchant's daughter's hand, their quarrels and final rout, and originate in an earlier sketch entitled *The Sultors*. They come from the seedy world of the lower ranks of the civil and military service, a fertile source for Gogol's memorable caricatures and satire: Friedegg (Sam Dale), as square as he is short, down-to-earth and fixated on the details of the dowry; Anuchkin (Nick Dunning), an elongated, sensitive soul, whose chief interest in a future wife is that she speak excellent French (not that he can judge – his father, the swine, never taught him the language); and Zhevalkin (John Price), retired naval officer, tender and loquacious, falling into endless reminiscence about his travels. The most extended of these, about Sicily, is a *reur de force*.

The more developed characters of Podkolyossin (James Smith), who finally evades the clutches of matrimony by escaping through a window, and his friend, Keekharov (Philip Voss), who sets himself up as a rival to the professional matchmaker through a typically Gogolian ability to be taken in by his own fantasizing, were both introduced at a later stage of Gogol's work on the play. The object of all this matchmaking, Agafya Tichonovna (Maggie Wells), is no coquette. Dressed to the

nines in the most incredibly vulgar gown and headress (the costumes by Paul Dart, also responsible for the set, are magnificent) she is constantly overcome by shyness and the momentous decision she must make. It is a measure of Maggie Wells's skill that when her heart is finally touched by Podkolyossin's tentative and far from dazzling courtship (they talk disjunctively about sewing, the weather, Russian workmen) her trompeuse love is really touching. As she dashes off to change into her wedding gown (it has been waiting in the cupboard for years) it is impossible not to wish her well.

Which brings us to Podkolyossin's escape through the window. Initially ecstatic about the possibility of a happiness he perceives for the first time, his mood suddenly changes as he faces the finality of the act. His climb out to the cupboard and up to the window (there a wall is an amazing structure of furniture, pictures, statues) is as abject, laborious and unwilling as his courtship. We seem to be witnessing, instead of a conventional dénouement of a girl sacrificing herself on the altar of marriage, the sacrifice of a man – deliberately rejecting life and happiness, in the name of freedom. It is in this poignant flight that the likeness to Gogol is most telling. The most tormented of comic writers, in perpetual flight from his friends, from his critics, from his country and finally from his genius, in his anguished death by starvation, is here recalled in a memorable dramatic moment.

Between depot and terminus

Christopher Wintle

PETER MAXWELL DAVIES
The No 11 Bus
Queen Elizabeth Hall

In one of the many comic episodes that make up the operatic journey of Peter Maxwell Davies's *The No 11 Bus*, a "flasher" climbs aboard and flings open his mackintosh to the indignation, shock and bewilderment of the other passengers. Turning to the audience, he reveals, not himself, but a "pope's mask there, bung, with triple tiara". In the context, the joke is a good one. The most affronted of the travellers are two oppressively sententious Mormons, who evidently travel life's journey in the full confidence of their spiritual destiny and its rewards ("Valny you try theumurgically to see what is not yet retroverted in the light", they intone, describing the bus depot at dawn). And more generally, the joke fits into the framework of the piece's sustained satire against religious conviction of any kind. Elsewhere, for example, an enthusiastic young preacher phones to complain of the bus's late arrival, only to find himself laughed at by an unexpected epiphany as he imagines that he has been put on to a hot-line to Heaven. The apocalyptic arrival at the "New Hammer-smith" terminal, the "home of the blessed", is also sent up; this time by a drag artist who gets helplessly entangled in the floral streamer that flows endlessly, and magically, from his/her mouth. In these, and many other cases, the counterpoint between comic detail and broader satire intent is effectively projected, and resourcefully supported in the music.

Yet, although the work provides an excellent vehicle for the raffish, irreverent mining of Simon MacBurtney, and although it justifies its larger, ironic vision, which is so necessary if it is to make a more complex statement than, for example, a Stanley Baxter television show, it still leaves the impression of achieving less than it sets out to do. This would seem to have little to do with the fact that the dramatic situation throws up stereotypes and predictable responses: the passengers include a workman, a businessman, a charlady, a shopper, various clerics and some token skinheads and punks. The staging points are appropriately marked (there are "no returns out on the route past the World's End"), and the conclusion draws upon a well-trodden formula: the players file out singly, leaving pollution in the darkness, the pianist's driver to add a soft-swinging coda to the whole.

before being snuffed out himself by a short, sharp rat-e-toot from the percussionist/bus-conductor. For, however familiar, all this is done with an impressive commitment, skill and wit, and sustained by fluid, energetic music. Indeed, Davies's extraordinary flair for getting the best from artists who are sometimes not primarily musicians is very apparent in those scenes where MacBurtney mimics the sounds of the telephone system, peignantly turns the backcloth into which the bus is eventually reduced into a bunch of flowers which he puns on, and in the scene where he is eventually reduced to a bunch of flowers which he puns on, and in the scene where he is eventually reduced to a bunch of flowers which he puns on.

Rather, it is in the way it integrates its third, end most ambitious level, that the work seems less satisfactory. As elsewhere, Davies uses a number of iconographically-based dances (related here to the Tarot cards) as vehicles for the exploration of the imaginative worlds of his principal characters. He writes, for example, of the fifth section: "The High Priestess and the Hanged Man, with Pelence and Wrath. The Charlady wonders who to feed her children. The mime enters as a Businessman, this time to become involved with Pelence and Wrath (dancers)" (Wrath wins). In the theatre, though, the connection here, as in many other sections, seems fortuitous (why should a businessman be a charlady's bread-winner? why should he be so simply corrupted?) and the dances (the weakest aspect of the production in any case) do not genuinely seem to effect a transition from the demonic to the mythic. And the composer's own suggestion that "an initiate" of the Tarot "can work out the Ancient Greek connections" seems too easy a reliance on that aspect of the modernist, Joycean aesthetic that enjoys challenging its readers, or listeners, to ever deeper, and more arcane, areas of learning.

Nevertheless, the *Fires of London*, under the young Viennese conductor, Günther Baur-Schenk, performed, with apparent ease, an immensely virtuosic score, that is very evidently allusive in its parodies of popular devotional music, and rather less so in the much-discussed quotations from Brahms, Wagner and Davies himself. Only the vocal writing seems a little inhibited. Mary Thomas in two roles, and Deedee Stephenson and Brian Rayner Cook as the Mormons, all contributed valuably to an evening that, packed audience seemed to enjoy hugely.

The libretto of *The No 11 Bus* is available from Chester Music at £1.50.

From vision to vulgarity

Tim Hilton

The Pre-Raphaelites
Tate Gallery, until May 28
LESLIE PARRIS (Editor)
Pre-Raphaelite Papers
272pp. Tate Gallery/Allen Lane. £12.95.
(paperback £6.95)
0713916397

JEREMY MAAS
Hunt and The Light of the World
240pp. Scholar. £10.
0859676838
HENRY TREFFRY DUNN
Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle, or Cheyne Walk Life
Edited by Rosalie Mander
72pp. Dalrymple Press, 5 Lodge Lane, Westham, Kent TN16 1RJ. £36.
0950730149

Pre-Raphaelitism was the first artistic movement to be known as a movement; separated, that is, from the normal run of art, new, clinking, and in some way progressive. It is a prototype of the avant-garde. Yet, as the familiarity of the Tate's comprehensive exhibition shows, the paintings of Pre-Raphaelitism are not esoteric or specialized. They are more normal to us than are, say, the country house pictures of Reynolds and Gainsborough, or any English art or our own century. Pre-Raphaelitism is popular: it is (as occasionally it intended to be) art for all. Its vivid and anecdotal character makes it especially attractive. The wealth of biographical and literary reference, the dashing private lives of its artists, all contribute to the movement's reputation. The interest in Pre-Raphaelitism has hardly ever been aesthetic. It is not surprising that the most influential of all books on the subject, William Gaunt's *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy*, really had no need of illustration.

To this day, the study of Pre-Raphaelitism is rarely visual. Historians of the movement consider style only in general terms, and are not interested in comparing paintings or assessing influence. They avoid specifically pictorial questions. They would not dream of discussing (for instance) the nature of Victorian colour, even though the Pre-Raphaelite palette was evidently peculiar. They study documents, biography, patronage, literary parallels. Perhaps this is prudent. Or perhaps they have not been inspired by the art? For Pre-Raphaelitism, as is now evident, does not define itself in magisterial works by artists at the height of their creative powers. There are no compelling masterpieces in this movement; and its historians, confronted by an elusive adherence to a set of ideals – nature, truth, poetry and the like – is more likely to avoid discussion and refine that classic form of ahistorical writing, the catalogue entry.

This large exhibition and its detailed catalogue (312pp. £10.95. 0 1400 6993 3) are the particular achievement of two young scholars, Judith Bronckhurst and Malcolm Warner, whose docile hands have taken the form of catalogues raisonnés of, respectively, Helman Hunt and Millais. Bronckhurst and Warner provide the most telling new material in the catalogue, and it is because of their labours that we can now understand the motives of so many significant paintings. It is pleasant to see how much more competent they are than the older Pre-Raphaelite historians. But, alas, it is not now the case that youth is at the helm and pleasure at the prow. The companion volume of essays, *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*, is dispiritingly unadventurous. It contains new information, but no new thinking. One would scarcely even gather from it that Pre-Raphaelitism was a fresh approach to art. And yet, were we Dyce, or Mulready, or Richmond – older academicians who looked kindly on the new generations – would we not think the PRB the most bumptious, amiable and talented student of their year, and also rather exciting, as we learn what they were up to?

In fact Pre-Raphaelitism made itself understood extremely quickly. Its absorption into the Academy was a measure of its public success, and of the timeliness of its contribution. But, was this also a measure of its aesthetic

failure? No contributor to *Pre-Raphaelite Papers* addresses this crucial question. Nor do we learn much of Rossetti, the least academic (but, I would say, the most cultured) of the Brotherhood. His "Ecce Anella Domini" of 1849–50 is the most radical painting in the exhibition. Of the early PRB pictures, this is the one that looks most directly to Italian fresco for its inspiration. In this sense it is revivalist and imitative. But still it is radical, for its simplicity, clear planes and pale tone are utterly unlike any contemporary work. The painting was too advanced for its own artist, who did not see that he should pursue its implications: only later avant-garde art could learn such a lesson. But Rossetti probably realized from it that he could escape the tyranny of the minute, enamelled Pre-Raphaelite technique, which effectively forbade any natural relationship of brush to canvas. Rossetti's difficulties in learning to paint in this particular way are often recounted. Thus we tend to interpret him as a racy, slightly fearless fellow who found deliberate oil painting an exasperating business. And this was so: but we ought no longer to take his comrades' expertise as an ideal. Rossetti's light-handed, flexible touch, not altogether fluent, produces one of the few authentic paintings in this show, where so much is contrived. "La Pis de Tulomei", borrowed from Kamsis, is the revelation of the exhibition: but it also suggests how much was lost by the other Pre-Raphaelites' obscure principles.

An essay on technique, perhaps by a member of the Tate's conservation department, would have been useful. For all the talk about the "wet white ground" we still do not know enough about its implications. Some things about it are obvious. It heightened colour, painting had to be done neatly, and since the technique was so slow it encouraged pre-planning. But one might explore other aspects of the method. For instance, it has affinities with painting on ivory, and with other procedures of the miniaturist. Many Pre-Raphaelite paintings in the first stage of the movement look as if they are very large miniatures. Sometimes they would be better paintings if they were smaller, sometimes if they were larger. A major failure of early Pre-Raphaelitism is that its pictures were so often out of scale. The obvious example is Ford Madox Brown's "Work", which is a miniaturized mural. But there are more than a dozen other early paintings that would have been improved by being painted on a canvas (or panel): there are a number of pictures on wood appropriate to their content. Clearly, Pre-Raphaelites wanted to keep their pictures smallish in order to lessen the laborious task of painting them. They also needed the size that would best exhibit their microscopic abilities. But this kind of painting sacrifices just as much as it gains, and its first loss is naturalness.

Millais's wonderful early talent was to paint in this detailed manner: indeed, he failed whenever he was painting detail. The verve is still impressive. Millais's ease in outpacing his elders is important. It seems to me that "Isabella" overtakes and outshines such paintings as Mulready's "First Love" (1838–9, but exhibited in the RA in 1848, the year before "Isabella") and also Wilkie's "Chelyes Pansieners", which has similar motifs. Clever Millais did not like much art other than his own. He understood his ambitions only in terms of rivalry. Thus Ruskin was likely to mean more to him than his fellow artists. But I doubt whether the critic could have helped him to develop his art. Their professional relationship floundered in the difficulties of landscape and portraiture. Millais was not a landscapist (the genre has more to do with space than detail) and his portraiture was at its best in "Isabella", after which it declined. The whole question of portraiture is interesting. Pre-Raphaelitism was born just when photography had put traditional portraiture under most pressure (and killed off the miniature). The twin Pre-Raphaelite aspirations towards realism and the ideal, obviously contradictory in their demands, are perhaps more clearly seen in their portraits than in any other aspect of their painting. Again, we need more discussion of the matter. Stephanie Gillet's essay on "Pre-Raphaelitism and Photography" is the only one

ginal contribution to *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. begins to tackle the problem but is necessarily limited in approach.

Millais's ill-advised portrait of Ruskin hangs near Helman Hunt's "The Awakening Conscience". In such a way an art of nature and romanticism brings the bourgeois tradition of the interior to a ghastly apotheosis. Pre-Raphaelitism was oddly ill-equipped to deal with the world, indoors or outdoors. A great difficulty was perspective. The painters avoided aerial perspective by shaping the tops of the canvas to cut out the sky, or by plunging the view downwards, or by painting night scenes and the strange violet twilights of high summer; and since "correct" linear perspective would look like Renaissance painting – Raphaelite, in fact – they first tilted their planes towards flatness, then settled for a kind of space that is evidently influenced by the conventions of the stage set. There was ample precedent for this in Hogarth, and plenty of reasons why it was convenient. In Pre-Raphaelitism, convenience very often wins the day.

Malcolm Warner reveals how the early Millais took his subjects from contemporary opera. An examination of Pre-Raphaelitism and theatre would be revealing. The frozen dramas, the contrivance, the nearness to the grotesque, the appeal to middle-class standards, the reliance on costume, all connect this kind of painting with the Victorian stage. But none of the essays that accompany this exhibition takes any subject head on. Why, for instance, have we a modern art movement with quite so many paintings on religious topics? With individual paintings, the catalogue can point to the relevance of the "papal aggression", or the Gortian core, or even that very evangelicalism in which Ruskin was reared. Alistair Grieve usefully shows how there is a high church iconography in a group of early drawings. But the phenomenon surely demands a broader approach than is provided here. The show itself has pretty well everything needed to understand the visual principles of

Pro-Raphaelitism (though it is a pity that so many works are exhibited under glass). Only a few pictures are missing: "Sir Isumbras at the Ford" would have told us more about Millais's attempts to enlarge his scale and broaden his touch than does his "Eve of St Agnes". The drawings are well selected, and enable one to look more kindly on Burne-Jones. The best individual paintings are the set of relatively unaffected landscapes of 1853–4 by Madox Brown and Hunt. But of course the exhibition cannot show Pre-Raphaelitism within the context of the rest of English art of the time. And here is the major critical problem that its historians should have faced. As Pre-Raphaelitism joined the mainstream of nineteenth-century painting it tended to lose its distinct look, and its quality. It becomes popular academicism. There is a technical term for this decline from fine art to a flashy relationship with an audience, in species sharing of sentiment. It is "vulgarity". Ruskin (and this was far-sighted of him) was the first to realize that this was the problem of the new art that he had hoped would "speak to all men". He first applied the term to painting in 1858, just at the time of his disillusionment with Pre-Raphaelitism. Daily, certain historians are now beginning to see that this matter is worth attention. Jeremy Maas, whose little book *Helman Hunt and The Light of the World* is an engaging account of the public fortunes of the world's best-known rephile icon, speaks of "its inexorable ascent into the empyrean of religious sentiment and popular culture". Pre-Raphaelitism badly needs historians who are able to make value-judgments. Such critics will be trained in modern art, not in the "history of taste" or the increasingly antiquarian pursuit of more documents about artists' home lives and loves. Not that such things do not have their fascination: Rosalie Mander's beautifully produced edition of Henry Treffry Dunn's *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his Circle* gives delightful glimpses of the Cheyne Walk household of this mysterious, failed, artist.

Colonialist caricatures

Peter Kemp

HOWARD BRENTON
Desert of Lies
BBC1

Like the Kalahari, where most of its action takes place, Howard Brenton's *Desert of Lies* turns out to be an overheated tract, flat and fairly arid. As with either of his plays, it is essentially an attack on colonialism – not so much the political variety (though scenes in South Africa, Heuse and with black freedom fighters keep this in view) as emotional and intellectual modes of exploiting the Third World.

The play focuses on two different attempts to dominate the desert and its inhabitants: the setting-out of a family of missionaries in the 1840s, and the expedition of a trio of contemporary explorers – Sue, a tabloid journalist; Jake, a redundant car-worker; and George, a supposedly practical visionary. These two story-lines, generally held in parallel, occasionally intersect.

Common to both expeditions, Brenton aims to demonstrate, is a predatory response to other ways of life. Speaking to Sue, an African politician rails thus out: "There's something prurient, something deeply ugly in the European hunger for experience, Africa is still to you some kind of slave ship. You still fantasize about black thick native bodies down below, writhing in the filthy hold." Trading in black and white divisions, this speech typifies the play, with its crude segregation between resourceful, realistic, sophisticated blacks and incompetent, deluded, naive whites.

Faced with the desert and its demands, the Europeans quickly become physically and psychologically disoriented. Among the Bible-toting Brooms, brotherly love evaporates – as an assault on symbolically named Abel by an axe-wielding sibling treachery drives home. Sequences of outrageous irony

have a patriarchal Pape leudly putting his trust in God or his progeny whimperingly teppie into the grave. Just as the missionaries get het under the cellar, so the contemporary figures, less their cool. With their Land Rover expended and their preconceptions overturned, they find themselves brought to a standstill in mere ways by one. The sextant gets cracked. George goes insane. Remorselessly, the supply of Diet Pepsi dries up. Eventually, after much application of cosmetics and tatters by the make-up department, only Sue is left – ravensously preparing to cannibalize George. "I am hungry for experience", she'd announced before leaving England. Frightened lest the irony be lost, Brenton makes her croakingly repeat this into a tape-recorder while besitating between George's liver and kidneys.

In the nick of time, just as her knife is making its incision, a couple of bushmen arrive with a handful of maggots to save her. A year later, elegantly got up in ethnic jewellery and with a baby on her back, Sue is reclaimed from nomadic life by emissaries from the twentieth century. Her rescue, it transpires – parodying the Brooms' faith in heavenly bodies – was effected with the help of a surveillance satellite. Back in London and refusing to write her memoirs, she concludingly voices the play's moral: "I haven't anything to say. I just got lost in the desert. Why tell lies about it?"

Sue's high-minded refusal to impose an artificial shape on her primitive and pristine experiences rings rather hollowly though, since with his play Brenton is doing what she denounces. As much as any of its depleted characters, *Desert of Lies* sets out to exploit the Third World for ideological purposes. Actuality is enslaved to propaganda; caricature and parable dominate; the play's setting and inhabitants are kept firmly subservient to Brenton's ruling obsessions. Accordingly – despite full-blooded performances from Toei Bell as the uncle and Cherie Lunghi as the journalist – the play's life, like that of most of its characters, soon runs into the sand.

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Ditching the Duce

Christopher Seton-Watson

DINO GRANDI
251 pp. Quaran'anni dopo
Edited by Renzo De Felice
501 pp. Bologna: Il Mulino. L30,000.
88 15 003312

Dino Grandi will be remembered mainly for his leading role in the overthrow of Mussolini on July 25, 1943. Three weeks later he left Italy on an unofficial mission to plead with the British for generous treatment for his country: in this he failed, and found himself stranded in Lisbon, impotently watching Italy's protracted martyrdom. Many years later, after his return home, he handed over his papers to Renzo De Felice, historian and biographer of Mussolini. Among them De Felice found the manuscript of Grandi's own account of those events, written in Lisbon in 1944-45, and persuaded him to publish it without alteration. To it Grandi, now in his eighty-eighth year, has added a sixty-page *proemio* (preface), dated "Bologna, 4 giugno 1983", and De Felice has contributed a 116-page introduction.

Grandi describes his book as "a howl of anguish for our crucified Fatherland". It was written in the passion of the moment and with great polemical verve. Grandi's activity between his return to Rome from Bologna late on July 20 and the meeting of the Fascist Grand Council at 5 pm on July 24 is described almost hour by hour, and his version of the meeting itself is the fullest and most vivid yet published.

It was the Allied landings in Sicily on July 10 that convinced Grandi that, if Italy was to be saved from total ruin, Mussolini must be removed. Many others agreed, but all were waiting for the King to make the first move. Grandi decided that the King's excessively constitutional scruples might be overcome and his hand forced, by a resolution of the Grand Council. He therefore drafted a motion which called for "the immediate restoration of all State functions" as defined in the liberal constitution of 1848 (which, Grandi argued, had been violated by the fascist dictatorship but not destroyed), and invited Mussolini to request the King to assume command of the armed forces and "that supreme initiative of decision which our institutions attribute to him".

Again and again in this book Grandi asserts that there was no conspiracy, even among members of the Council. He had no knowledge of the preparations which court, police and military officials were making for Mussolini's arrest. Still less did he have any contact with the clandestine anti-fascist politicians. He told Mussolini of his intentions on July 22, and informed the King only at the moment when the Grand Council met, in order not to compromise the Crown. Initially he had little hope of success, but he felt he must try, whatever the risk. His first estimate, after talking with his closest collaborators, Bottai and Federzoni, was that of the twenty-nine members of the Council, only six, including themselves, could be counted on with certainty, while seven would be irreconcilably opposed and the remaining sixteen undecided. It was impossible to predict Mussolini's reaction. As Grandi puts it, "a handful of milliammen with a warrant of arrest" would suffice to quell the opposition. It was not even certain that Mussolini would allow a vote, for which there was no precedent.

By July 24 Grandi had obtained promises of support from two key figures: Ciano, former foreign minister, and Mussolini's son-in-law, and De Bono, one of the quadrumvirs of the 1922 march on Rome. He also believed that he had secured the agreement of Scorza, secretary of the Fascist Party. But when he entered the Palazzo Venezia for the Council meeting, he had obtained only "adhesions in principle", not signatures, and half the members had not even been approached. Everything therefore would depend on the course of the debate.

The first description of the meeting to be published was Mussolini's, in his *Storia di un anno* of 1944. Grandi tells us that this is accurate as far as it goes, but includes only those parts of the discussion which put Mussolini in a good light. Grandi's twenty-page account in this book is based on the record composed by Bottai, Federzoni and two others on the morning of July

25; he also prints the full texts of his two main contributions to the debate.

After six and a half hours Mussolini adjourned the meeting for twenty minutes. Grandi wondered whether he would in fact not return, but send in his militia "to clear the hall". But he came back, quietly, and the debate resumed. Grandi presented his motion, to which he had collected twenty signatures during the interval. Mussolini spoke later, calmly and confidently, "as if saddened by the pettiness of the men who sat before him, as if he wished to appear as Christ at the Last Supper". He professed to be certain that the King would stand by him and warned his critics to beware. Grandi could see that many of his supporters had been shaken. Mussolini "had at one stroke regained all that he had appeared to have lost".

He was still, despite everything, the magician and the master. He was followed by Scorza, who, instead of supporting Grandi, attacked him, and presented a motion, approved by Mussolini, calling for drastic reforms of the machinery of government and the high command, but all within the framework of the fascist régime and under the leadership of Mussolini and the party. Grandi thought that "the game was lost". But when the critical moment came at 3 am, Mussolini, to Scorza's dismay, put Grandi's motion to the vote before his own. To Grandi's astonishment nineteen voted for, eight against and one abstained. Mussolini then closed the meeting.

At 4 am Grandi saw the King's ADC, Acquarone. He urged the dismissal of Mussolini and the formation of a national government of "new men" uncompromised by fascism. The new government's immediate task, Grandi urged, must be to ask the Allied powers for

an armistice and prepare the armed forces to fight the Germans: only in this way could Italy hope to induce the Allies to modify their insistence on unconditional surrender. He himself offered, on the strength of the familiarity with Britain's leaders which he had acquired as ambassador in London before the war, to fly immediately to Spain for "discreet and unofficial" discussion of armistice terms, pending the appointment of official plenipotentiaries. He believed that there was not a moment to lose.

From that moment everything, from Grandi's point of view, went wrong. The King not only dismissed Mussolini but had him arrested, on a charge which Grandi regarded as "a blot on the honour of the Crown". The King also insisted on a non-political government, headed by Badoglio, for whom Grandi had little respect. Badoglio signally failed to achieve union and mobilization of the "national forces", and instead of breaking with the Germans, announced that "the war continues". This perplexed the Allies, who saw no reason for softening their terms, and gave the Germans time to prepare their take-over. The armistice negotiations were conducted with what Grandi regarded as criminal dilatoriness, and ended with unconditional surrender. He himself reached Lisbon only on August 26, when it was too late to exercise any influence. The public announcement of the armistice on September 8 was the signal for the Germans to occupy two-thirds of Italy. Mussolini was rescued by German paratroopers and set up a puppet republic in Salò, in northern Italy. In January 1944 five of those who voted for Grandi on July 25 were executed by command of Mussolini for "treason". All this, Grandi argues, could have been avoided. In his view it was in the first

week after July 25 that "Italy was ruined". De Felice in his introduction justifiably questions the practicability of Grandi's plan. But at least he saw clearly that, if Italy was to be saved from devastation by war and total subjection to Hitler, the fascist régime had immediately to be liquidated. For this he must be given due credit, as also for his courage in taking the first essential steps. The publication of his personal testimony is therefore to be welcomed.

Whether he was wise to publish his *proemio* is more questionable. It is the reflections of an old man on a political and diplomatic career which ended forty years ago. He states that during fourteen years as under-secretary and minister for foreign affairs, and as ambassador in London, his credo was "close union with Britain". In London he never lacked "the understanding, the friendship and the sympathy of the British world", and Churchill became the best of his many British friends. One two famous occasions in 1938, in February when he helped to bring about Eden's resignation, and in September when he suggested to Neville Chamberlain of an appeal to Mussolini brought about the Munich Conference, he tells us that he acted in direct contradiction of Mussolini's instructions. These and many other statements, while contributing to the still lively controversy over Italian Fascist foreign policy, will doubtless be challenged.

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The barbarians settle down

Peter Linehan

ROGER COLLINS
Early Medieval Spain: Unity in Diversity,
400-1000
317 pp. Macmillan. £14 (paperback, £5.95).
0333 262824

Although British and American scholars have done notable work on parts of the period covered by this latest volume in the New Studies in Medieval History series, one need only look on the shelves for a reliable guide - or indeed for any guide - in English to be made aware of the need for Roger Collins's book.

It takes a brave man to attempt to cover six centuries of history and, since some Spanish historians tend to agonize over the deeper significance of the period, seeking there the roots of contemporary ills and their remedies, there is something to be said for entrusting the task to a brave foreigner. Collins's appraisal of the period is cool and in general judicious: not for him, for example, the ludicrous issue of whether the Visigoths were "really" Spaniards. He is also spare and brisk, as he needs to be. He does not waste time on empty generalities. The diet he offers is wholesome, wholemeal in a fault, packed full of roughage. Indeed his first chapter ("The Emergence of a New Order") is so much taken up with the coinings and goings of the barbarians who moved into the rich Roman inheritance that it comes as a relief when they settle down and stay still long enough for the author to scrutinize them, which Collins does to considerable effect. Not that this deprives him of the opportunity to indulge in some rewarding speculation en route, or to raise questions about the nature and limitations of the sources, or which he excels.

This last is perhaps the single most notable feature of *Early Medieval Spain*. It is only to be regretted that here and there the secondary material receives rather short shrift, and that the author's asides are sometimes a shade too cryptic for all but the initiated. Not all his readers will readily appreciate the importance of his compacted reference to the necropolises excavated by Zeiss; and when, later, he confesses his scepticism regarding the significance of the term *imperialium* in early tenth-century Asturias even those readers who share his doubts will wish that he had allowed himself, or been allowed, more than a two-line endnote on the subject. On one major issue treated in his first chapter Collins's meaning is, however, crystal clear. Of the much controverted question of the scope of the Visigothic law-codes he provides a masterly account. The six persuasive pages to which he argues in favour of the "territorial" thesis say as much as as many monographs on the subject.

The seventh century occupies the larger part of the book - and quite right too. Also very properly, Collins allows his sources to dictate the pace. From the remarkable *Vitas Patrum Emeritensium* he recreates the provincial life of early seventh-century Mérida, where the local bishops exercised a quasi-senatorial sway over the community's affairs. Of the three bishops described in the *Vitas* two were Greeks (one of them, the medically qualified Paul, whose *entree* had been eased by the assistance he had rendered: the wife of a local dignitary in her hour of greatest need). In view of Collins's willingness to generalize from the case of Mérida to that of "the other major cities of the south" it is all the more odd that he should seek to minimize the importance of Byzantine influence - unless he means to argue, as when he says that Gregory the Great's influence "cannot be minimised", that Byzantine influence cannot be exaggerated.

In other respects his meaning is clear: not before time Isidore of Seville's political importance is cut down to size. To apostrophize as "patently nonsensical" the view that there was "a fundamental divide and indeed hostility between monastic and clerically derived bishops" may be going rather far. There were monastic and clerical modes. And while it is right to bring down the democratic inverted pyramid belatedly upon the monastic *pactum* (which was not, in Collins's view, "especially egalitarian or deleterious to the authority of the abbot"), might the author not have concluded that institution with the principle

enunciated in the *Liber iudiciorum*, that the law was greater than the king - a principle of "fundamental importance to the minds of the devisers of the code"? The principle, however, has "occasionally been denigrated or neglected by modern commentators" - so Collins comes to its rescue, with his free hand smiting down the grotesque exaggerations of the pactualist publicists. In his zeal to correct both (mis)interpretations perhaps he loses the opportunity of considering whether there may not have been some measure of interplay between monastic and secular spheres. The iconoclast in Collins gets the better of him and he stumbles on the slurs of his own making.

But these are small matters in comparison with his achievement in rescuing seventh-century Spain from the condescension of posterity. "This was a society with a sense of direction", "development rather than stagnation" was its keynote. "It was not declining or decaying (in 711): it was evolving". His account is invariably stimulating and his treatment - of the Church, and of the monarchs' treatment of the Jews - sure-footed. His strictures on the dangers of writing social history from legal codes are timely. Here and there doubts occur. Was Ariauism really such a dead duck in 589? Is the testimony of Vulfwin of Bierzo (elsewhere described as "eccentric") sufficient war-

rant for the view that as early as the late seventh century the cult of Hermengild was "established"? Yet overall the Visigothic chapters are a resounding success.

"There are remarkable parallels between the Arab invasion of Spain in 711 and the Norman conquest of England in 1066." Indeed there are. There are also remarkable hazards involved in the drawing of them. It is a pity that Collins does not chance his arm here by allowing Guidard's important findings on the survival of Arab tribal structures in Umayyad Spain more than a five-line summary. The author simply does not have enough space in his two chapters on al-Andalus for the stretch of territory he has in cover. He moves restlessly from point to point. The shadows of Dozy and Lévi-Provençal (regularly misspelt) fall across his pages: the examples are familiar, of Zaryab and his deodorants, Ibn Firnas the flying doctor, Sancho the Fat's slimming cure. But any historian would be hard put to maintain the freshness of Collins's Visigothic chapters, and at the very least (for such is the measure of his achievement) he expounds a large amount of modern scholarship on subjects "for which there is nothing of note in English". Moving to the Christian North he identifies underlying tensions between the Asturias and Galicia (historians of Santiago kindly note).

He is good on the Basques, and compresses a great deal of scholarship, some of it his own, into his section on Catalonia.

At the end, exhausted, Collins's guard falls. He falls victim to the sterile issue implied by his subtitle. Unity and diversity: what does this mean in the context of the three centuries after 711, and of the nine after that? What does Collins's last sentence mean? It is well crafted, as his whole book is. But given one last dose of scepticism (Barbero-Vigil full strength, for example), the author might have resisted the temptation.

Roger Collins's splendid book deserves to be warmly welcomed by Spanish and therefore European medieval historians alike. Macmillan are to be congratulated for having published this worthy companion volume to Angus Mackay's *Spain in the Middle Ages: from Frontier to empire, 1000-1500* (1977).

R. W. Southern's *Medieval Humanism*, originally published in 1970, has now been reissued in paperback (261 pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £6.50. 0 631 13649 5). Among the essays included in the volume are studies of Bede, St Anselm and Meister Eckhart; "Humanism and the School of Chartres" and "Peter of Blois: a Twelfth Century Humanist?"; and "England's First Entry into Europe".

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Carved calendars

Aubrey Burl

MARTIN BRENNAN
The Stars and the Stones: Ancient Art and Astronomy in Ireland
208pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.
0500 01295 4

Five thousand years ago, on the banks of the Boyne in eastern Ireland, the massive passage-grave of Newgrange was erected. Its design was not simple: the entrance was aligned on the midwinter sunrise, and on many of the stones were enigmatic carvings of lozenges, triangles and spirals.

This art has frustrated interpretation. The Abbé Breuil, Stuart Piggott and Claire O'Kelly have built up a corpus of the symbols but not found an explanation of their meaning. Now, in an intriguing and irritating book, Martin Brennan, an Irish-American artist, offers a provisional theory of what this art and the "tombs" meant to their creators. Between 1976 and 1982 the author lived in Ireland, studying the Neolithic cemeteries of Loughcrew and the Boyne. His work there led to an over-hasty and erratic book, *The Boyne Valley Vision* (Dolmen Press, 1980) and then, after a further twelve months of research, to *The Stars and the Stones*. Many of its ideas are persuasive but they are presented in an adventure-story style more appropriate to *Raiders of the Lost Ark* than to the world of real archaeology.

The book is well illustrated with the author's own sketches, there is a bibliography and a brief index, but it is somewhat awkwardly subdivided into an introduction of fifty-nine pages, describing Brennan's methods of investigation, some of them unorthodox and uncritical, and a major section of 138 pages entitled "Megalithic Observatories". This is the better part of the book and worth careful consideration.

Brennan puts forward three hypotheses: that the Neolithic tumuli were not tombs but temples of light; that they were aligned on the

sunrise at different times of the year; that the art is composed of solar and lunar symbolism, used by its makers for time-keeping or for recording the cycles of the sun and moon.

Much of this is possible, although sometimes overstated. Brennan is certainly wrong about the burials: nineteenth-century excavations at Loughcrew showed clearly that the cairns were tombs. He is probably right, however, about their orientations. With the example of Newgrange, and with current research discovering evidence for astronomical interests among the prehistoric societies of the British Isles, it would not be surprising if these people believed in an association between the sun and moon and the cycle of life and death. It is even possible, as Brennan claims, that the cemeteries were laid out as landscaped devices for recording the solstices, equinoxes and the cross-quarter days of February, May, August and November.

The third of Brennan's hypotheses is the most convincing. His argument that the spiral was a solar symbol and the crescent a lunar one is hardly new, but his suggestion that the lozenge might have represented the four quarters of the solar year is. His analysis of "sundials" at Knowth, and of the elaborate patterning of a kerbstone there as a depiction of both the phases of a lunar month and of a method of harmonizing the solar and lunar cycles over a five-year period, is certainly novel and may well provide us with fresh insights into the significance of these carvings.

Despite its faults and its inaccuracies *The Stars and the Stones* may prove to be a pioneering work. Brennan's interpretation of the Newgrange symbols as astronomical is far more plausible than previous suggestions that they were formalized versions of a Mother Goddess. He contrives, quite successfully, to integrate the art with the alignments in the megalithic tombs, something not previously achieved, and in his book we may have been given a revelation of the cosmological beliefs of our distant forefathers.

Fieldmen and theorists

Glyn Daniel

LEWIS R. BINFORD
In Pursuit of the Past: Decoding the archaeological record
256pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.50.
0500 05042 2

In his enthusiastic foreword to this book Colin Renfrew says, "The work of Lewis Binford establishes him as the outstanding archaeological thinker of our time. His influence, as the senior and most original figure in the intellectual developments of the 1960s which came to be called the 'New Archaeology', has arguably been greater than that of any other writer this century concerned with the understanding of man's early past." When, too, he lectured to the American Archaeological Association, Renfrew declared his belief that "Binford, with his associates, had made a greater contribution to archaeological thought than any worker in this century" (*American Journal of Archaeology*, 1980). Brian Fagan shares Renfrew's enthusiasm and writes: "Binford's intense and incisive thinking about the past has been a major force behind the new archaeology since the 1960s. His influence on American archaeology has been enormous, equivalent to that of Gordon Childe in European prehistory between the wars" (*Antiquity*, 1984).

These judgments ensure that this book will be read by all interested in archaeology as a source of our knowledge of man's past. That such views are not shared by the present reviewer nor by very many other archaeologists in America and Europe makes *In Pursuit of the Past* even more a compulsory read. It is certainly the clearest and most cogent statement of the views of this persuasive, prolific, controversial and often belligerent writer. Let us look at him. Born in 1929, Binford studied archaeology and anthropology at the University of North Carolina and Michigan, became an instructor in Michigan, an Assistant Professor in Chicago and Santa Barbara, an Associate Professor at UCLA, and from 1968 has been Professor in the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque. He came into the public eye with his article "Archaeological Perspectives" in *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, edited by S.R. and L.R. Binford (1968), his *An Archaeological Perspective* (1972), *Nunamiñt Ethnoarchaeology* (1978) and *Boyes: Ancient men and modern myths* (1981).

The new archaeologists of the 1960s did themselves a disservice by believing that to be scholarly it was necessary to write tortuously and obscurely, that opacity and gobbledygook would make the "old" archaeologists so confused that they would think they had been confounded. Binford has often been accused of doing himself harm by the involved, unclear way he writes. This book is different: it started as a series of lectures given in Britain and Scandinavia in 1980-81, and the taped lectures have been turned into a book "with the editorial collaboration of J. F. Cherry and Robin Torrence". The result is eminently readable and should be read by all students of the past who honestly want to know what the new archaeology of the 1960s was about. The chapters on Man, the Mighty Hunter, Life and Death at the Waterhole, and Hunters in a Landscape are essential, even exciting, reading. The fifth chapter, "An archaeological Odyssey", is a brief essay into autobiography and is fascinating: his criticism of the excesses of the new archaeology is particularly helpful. Binford's work on faunal remains is of special interest, but the chapters on the origins of agriculture and of complex societies and civilizations are thin and often disappointingly superficial.

Binford declares that there seem in Europe to be "two clearly distinguishable types of archaeologists: the specialists and technicians representing 'science in archaeology', and the social philosophers (structuralists, Marxists, morphogenesists etc.)"; and this is also true, he says, in North America, where the contrast is between "the hard-digging fieldmen" who discuss the strength of the liquor in various Mexican or South Dakota bars, and the so-called "theorists" who are more interested in "what it all means, regardless of whether there exists reliable means of getting answers to such a question". This gives away sadly the degree

of the new archaeology, or processual archaeology as the angry young men of the 1960s today prefer to call their discipline, now that they and their hats have grown old. What in this Binford dichotomy has happened to the traditional archaeologists, the backbone of the profession?

Binford asks that we should reject the idea that archaeologists are "simply strange historians working at a disadvantage: historians that is without written records". But that is what prehistorians are and it is no use pretending that archaeologists are anthropologists or natural scientists in the hope that this will make them seem more respectable, although it may make it easier for them to get money from Science Foundations and other grant-giving bodies.

It is the subtitle of this book that should give everyone pause. To what extent can the archaeological record be decoded? Binford quotes Christopher Hawkes's 1954 *American Anthropologist* paper, but not Margaret Smith's paper (*Archaeological Newsletter*, 1955), nor the judgments of those experienced, though traditional, archaeologists, Gordon Childe and Stuart Piggott. Binford describes how he attended a lecture by the late M. J. O'Kelly on Newgrange but was disappointed that O'Kelly was reluctant "to consider the nature of the society in which the site had functioned". This was, of course, because to do so was not decoding the past but indulging in speculation. It is wise to use ethnographic parallels and Binford is very good at this, but with his curious insensitivity to the historical development of ethno-archaeology, there is no mention of any earlier efforts such as Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, Sollas's *Ancient Hunters* and Nilsson's *The Primitive Inhabitations of Scandinavia*: these do not seem to be on the shelves at Albuquerque. But then it used to be a catchphrase in American conferences in the 1960s that nothing published before 1960 should be read - and for that matter nothing written by anyone over thirty.

Times have changed and the shouting and screaming have died away. But still one must constantly be aware that much of the alleged decoding of the archaeological record is the projection into prehistory of the prejudices and proclivities of present-day scholars. And in these lectures it would have been good if the author could have said, roundly and clearly, that much of the record is undecipherable - Upper Palaeolithic art and Megalithic art, for example. We say we are testing out the past by using ethnographical and historical models: doing well and good, but we must not forget that in so doing we are not decoding but inventing the past.

Gordon Willey has said recently that one cannot practise as an archaeologist unless one is an optimist. I am a practising archaeological pessimist: enjoying the record but not hopeful that many parts of it can or will be decoded. Binford has been reasonably moderate in this book, but when I see colleagues peopling Stonehenge with chieftains, astronauts and wise men from the East, I realize that the new archaeology, of which, as Braidwood says, Binford was "high priest", has got out of hand to the extent of injuring the credibility of some professional archaeologists. And when I read the writings of the Americans, Fritz, Plog, Watson, Le Blanc and Redman, which most European scholars consider, as Binford himself says, "a naive brand of positivism", I remember only too well how the disciples can outdo the master. We should now accept into the body of traditional archaeological scholarship the good that emerged from the American explosion of the 1960s, and Binford's new book is a useful guide to this good, although still burdened by the flamboyant theory and still not prepared to accept that most of the new archaeology was set out by one of the most outstanding archaeological thinkers of our time, W. W. Taylor, in his 1948 *A Study of Archaeology*.

In Pursuit of the Past should be read - as it will be by all serious archaeologists - in conjunction with Taylor, and with Paul Courbin's *Qu'est ce que l'archéologie?*, which discusses Binford, and his followers, in a critical and amusing way. Courbin sees the good and the bad in the way Binford proposes to decode the past - as does this reviewer.

The blubber barons

Stephen Mills

HARRY MORTON
The Whale's Wake
396pp. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
\$32.50.
08248 08303
GREG GATENBY (Editor)
Whales: A celebration
233pp. Hutchinson. £27.50.
0316 305103

In London, in 1815, a contingent of the Tsar of Russia's Cossacks celebrated the defeat of Napoleon by drinking neat whale oil from the street-lamps. At the time, Oxford Circus alone was reputed to sport more street-lighting than the whole of Paris, all fuelled by the products of Britain's expanding Pacific whale fleet.

From Pole to Pole, the whaling ships carried a European blend of mayhem and mercantile potential to the indigenous communities they visited. One of the last major destinations they arrived at was New Zealand where, for a brief span from around 1790 to 1840, they influenced the development of the islands. *The Whale's Wake* is a most interesting history of this influence. It provides an arresting catalogue of the whaling way of life in southern waters and examines in some depth the impact that whaling had on the Maoris and the contribution it made to Britain's annexation of New Zealand.

Two factors, Harry Morton suggests, encouraged the diversion of British whaling ships to the Antipodes. The shipment of convicts to New South Wales began in 1786, after the American War of Independence, and whalers could henceforth cover their outward expenses by carrying prisoners or provisions. At the same time numerous conflicts with Spain were making the rich whaling grounds off Peru unsafe for civilian traffic - fifteen British whaling ships had been seized there by 1799. One of the first ships to test the waters, in 1791, was the *Britannia*, owned by Samuel Enderby and Sons, the very company that Melville later described as "not far behind the united royal houses of the Tudors and Bourbons, in point of real historical interest". Britannia's captain reported sighting some 15,000 whales in ten days' sailing west of New Zealand, and by 1801 ships were making regular voyages to the islands.

Life for the whaling men was as tough around New Zealand as anywhere else. Voyages could be exceedingly long - the longest lasted eleven years - and were not always successful: a ship called the *Catewbo* spent eleven months at sea before catching her first whale. The sheer hard work involved in a whaling venture was overwhelming. In 1838 the log of the *Columbus* noted it as normal that five boats took eight hours to tow a dead whale across Ottago Harbour and alongside the ship. Occasionally these rigours were shared by women. Indeed the wife of Captain Gibbs of the *George Washington* became quite famous

as a masthead look-out. Another less fortunate captain's wife survived an appalling wreck and was washed up on a rocky island with only the ship's rats to keep her company. She lived off these and their descendants for five years until she was rescued.

The dangers of using only a hand-held harpoon and a length of rope to grapple a massive animal in its own element are of course well-known. Yet the most serious problem for the whalers was probably scurvy. Enderby's *Emilia* had two-thirds of her crew afflicted in 1789, in 1806 twenty-six out of twenty-eight sailors in the *Fox* succumbed and even in the 1840s few ships were completely free of it. One rather dubious cure was to bury the invalids up to their necks in the earth. On a beach in Le Bons Bay, a group of whalers is reported to have administered this treatment to some sick shipmates before going in search of fresh food. They returned to discover that wild pigs had devoured their friends' protruding heads.

Unattended appendages were also occasionally at risk from the cannibalistic Maoris. The native skill in preserving heads was a source of gruesome fascination to many whalers, who purchased them as mementos. Some unscrupulous souvenir-hunters were even willing to buy their heads on the hoof, as it were, selecting from living slaves. A certain Joe Roe became an established dealer in Maori heads, finally losing his own when a visiting tribe met some of their relatives in his display.

In many ways the Maoris were a match for the wild whalers. Warlike, socially cohesive within the tribe and agriculturally efficient, they could not be swept aside like the unlucky Tasmanians. Instead, they quickly learnt to supply the whalers' culinary needs, first with native fern-root. This tasted like the crust of new-baked bread but caused acute constipation and was said to be the main reason why Epsom Salts reached the Antipodes in such large quantities. Then they mastered the arts of growing potatoes and rearing pigs. For pigs the Maoris themselves developed a prodigious taste, one tribesman polishing off sixty pounds of pork in a twenty-four-hour sitting.

Admittedly, the celebrated missionary Samuel Marsden found that the Maoris did not always cope immediately with new ideas. They kept pulling up his wheat to look for tubers and he had to invoke *Tapu* to stop them continually looking under his chickens for eggs. Nevertheless, the Maoris obtained a great deal of what they wanted from the Europeans, namely guns and gunpowder. In order to prosecute their wars the chiefs were even willing to sacrifice the pleasure of eating their female slaves for the advantages of prostituting them to the sex-starved whalers.

In a perverse way this apparently increased the value of women and reduced the level of female infanticide. Gradually whalers married Maori women, finding them attractive, loyal and hard-working. Although Dr Morton takes care not to exaggerate the significance of whal-

ing in New Zealand's history, he makes a good case for its having provided a long apprenticeship in cultural understanding between whites and Maoris before the true settlers arrived from Europe and the tricky process of land sales began. He also points out that the whalers, as much by the trouble they caused as by the business they built, forced the arm of British law to reach out to New Zealand and to bring with it colonial bureaucracy.

Sealing had preceded whaling. In the early 1820s a sealing captain, John Gnuvo, had taken 35,000 skins in just three trips around New Zealand. In 1840 only 470 skins were imported into Sydney during the whole year. The whales were destroyed just as quickly, and even now,

one and a quarter centuries later, the Right whales have not returned.

It is this catastrophe that has provoked *Whales: A celebration*, a luxurious unholky of poems, prose and paintings by a hotchpotch of generous persons like Ariosto, Pliny and Brueghel who have donated their royalties to Greenpeace. The road to conservation is paved with many curious conversions. The compiler, Greg Gatenby, told the BBC that he came to whales when he fell in love with a dolphin-trainer in the Bahamas. In the words of one contributor, "Sometimes I find myself crying like the whales, 'Wee! Wee! Wee! Wee!'". I would rather read Dr Morton and give my money to the local naturalist trust.

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Shades of blackmail

Julian Symons

DONALD THOMAS
Belladonna: A Lewis Carroll Nightmare
310pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0333 360486

Lewis Carroll's passion for photographing young girls (not young boys) in what he coyly called "their favourite dress of nothing to wear" would be thought today almost proof positive of paedophilia. And, as Carroll's correspondence shows, flattered some maternal breasts even in nineteenth-century Oxford. Donald Thomas's novel, no doubt rightly, shows Carroll as emotionally but not physically vulnerable to taut adolescent thighs and developing breasts. His photographic activities made Carroll a natural mark for blackmail, and *Belladonna* is about a blackmail attempt that ends in murder.

Fact is woven ingeniously into this fiction. The blackmailier is Charles Augustus Howell, who fascinated the pre-Raphaelites and was for a time Ruskin's secretary. Many scandalous stories were told about "the man with green eyes, whose touch is paralysis", to quote one romantic view of him, and although they are probably exaggerated there is no doubt that Howell made money shadily, even though as is said here he "had never committed blackmail, in the sense in which the world understands that term". Photographs of Carroll's favourite model Jane Ashmole are stolen, printed up and labelled "Jane by an Oxonian", and Howell then calls upon Carroll to express his

horror at the possible scandal involved, and offer his services in obtaining the return of the photographs. Thomas manages all this wonderfully well. Carroll's relationship with his young girls, part lovely and part joking, is just right, and the problems he sets and the syllogisms he proposes are properly Carrollian. If Rab became a lawyer and Ymra a soldier, what became of Russian Yvan? He was a sailor, as one little girl understands and another doesn't.

Howell's machinations are damaged by the activities of his partner Dicky Tiptoe, formerly of the Indian Army. Tiptoe's financial need is urgent, his approach crude. He tries to compromise Carroll through a young prostitute, whom he introduces as his daughter. The murder which occurs three-quarters of the way through the book, and the subsequent police investigation, are handled rather perfunctorily. Thomas's heart is with Carroll and Howell, not with the details of murder, although he provides an ingenious alibi, appropriately linked to a camera.

Belladonna has its weaknesses. There is an unconvincing sub-plot relating to Jane's mother, and in the end we have rather more than enough of Carroll's feelings about his girls. The innocence of Howell's presence is not fulfilled, and one would have liked to have heard more of the blackmail documents he holds relating to Prince Albert Victor, Gladstone, "Major Kitchener and another gent", and others. When this has been said, however, *Belladonna* remains a remarkably fresh and original book, certainly one of the most entertaining mysteries of the year.

Murder on the market

Toby Fitton

DAVID HUME
Outbid
171pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
0434 354503

The financial thriller has a specialized following, who must have an instinctive knowledge of the rules under which the game is played, be up-to-date in Capital Transfer Tax regulations and learned in the daily routines of the Tokyo stock exchange. For outsiders, whose pocket calculators have too few digits to keep in touch with the vast sums at stake, there is the lower fascination of watching a man-made machine develop a life of its own and become a menace. In *Outbid* the artefact is the *Financial Times* Ordinary Share Index, whose workings during a disilluery take-over bid acquire a strange romantic fascination.

This play of market forces is recognized by David Hume, a financial journalist whose first novel this is. "Success touches a deep-felt spring in the City's collective consciousness", he writes: "like any small community at the mercy of apparently inexplicable and uncontrollable forces, it has a deep need for heroes able to outwit those forces."

The market in *Outbid* is not merely a play-

thing of the gods. Someone, somewhere, is so anxious to acquire an enormous Edinburgh whisky conglomerate that a murder takes place on a ski-slope, almost it seems as part of the ritual of business transaction. Running to ground the assassin of the *piste* and his paymaster is left not to the gendarmes but to an ambitious young merchant banker, whose detective work commends itself to the victim's beautiful (and rich) daughter.

The romantic interest is limited and stylized ("sobbing, she flung herself onto Frank's arms"); it is the rituals of the City that are more interestingly presented, whether in the discreet panelling and silver of a fine old stockbroker's firm's luncheon room or the expensive interior decoration of a pushy young merchant bank desperate to achieve respectability but not yet above a dubious deal.

It is the Establishment, their noses red with tapping in White's and Boodle's, their nods as good as their winks, who prove the more versatile and resourceful. Their well-placed international links are easily able to put paid to the machinations of a wily foreigner whose own business associates soon see him finished off at the bottom of a lake in Nevada. A lot of juicy commissions are made as the shares go up and down, honour is satisfied, the hero gets his bird, and the bird inherits her fortune. *Sher fortune domine*.

Big-city blues

Helen Harris

MAEVE BINCHY
London Transports
250pp. Century Publishing. £7.95.
07126 01864

The twenty-two stories which make up this collection were originally published in two volumes in 1978 and 1980 as *Central Line* and *Victoria Line*. Each story is named evocatively after a Tube station (there is one new story, "Euston") but there all connection with the Underground ends. The stories are about people adrift in the big city, with no idea of their destination, and not especially enjoying their journey either. Nearly all Maevie Binchy's central characters are women. Some of them are, like the author, Irish. They have come to London hoping to better themselves, but they rarely succeed. All of them are hard done by at the hands of men. They come to London for pri-

ate abortions, secret weekends with married men who mistreat them, sad, compensatory shoplifting sprees; or up from the country for reunions with sophisticated city friends, who snub them. They are a procession of sorry victims: exploited, overweight, above all frustrated. London is, in nearly every story, the fount of wickedness, perversion and corruption.

If it were not for the ease and buoyancy with which Maevie Binchy writes, *London Transports* would be a depressing read. But the author's humour and robust lack of self-indulgence save it. Her portrayal of the small skirmishes of day-to-day urban survival is enjoyable; her very observation of the different layers of London life is uncomfortably acute.

It is only a pity that stories centred on day-to-day social observations date fast. In post-punk London, tales of wife-swapping parties in Seven Sisters and a "Bohemian lifestyle" of discos and "pot"-smoking seem very dated, like a bank clerk dreaming of "big banking opportunities in the City".

Criminal proceedings

T. J. Binyon

DOUGLAS CLARK
The Monday Theory
197pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0575 033592

Hard-fitting female columnist and her lover are found dead in the bed of their seaside cottage. About-to-be-divorced husband is a prime suspect, but there are other runners as well for Scotland Yard's Masters and Green—Douglas Clark's usual duo—to ruminate over. Solid plot and original murder method outweigh the Dixon of Dock Green-ish quality of much of the conversation.

GWEN MOFFAT
Last Chance Country
183pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0575 033649

Gwen Moffat's heroine, the redoubtable Miss Pink, JP, leaves the damp English winter for a holiday on a millionaire's ranch in the middle of the Arizona desert: only to find, as might be expected, murder and mystery among the mesquite. Plot perhaps a little over-elaborate, but the vast expanse of the natural background, complete with flora and fauna, is put in with admirable success.

REGINALD HILL
Deadheads
275pp. Collins. £6.95.
0002313693

Reginald Hill's latest book takes us back to that Yorkshire town where Superintendent Dalziel and Inspector Pascoe keep law and order. Dalziel, crude and coarse, is, however packed off to London for most of the book, leaving Pascoe—visibly growing in cunning and experience with each case—to occupy the centre of the stage, as he probes into the career of lucky Patrick Aldermann, beneficiary of a series of seemingly accidental deaths. More leisurely in progress than most, the novel uses its time well to construct a solidly Northern background and to do much more than merely sketch in its characters.

DELL SHANNON
The Mycroft Memoranda
186pp. André Deutsch. £7.95.
0 233 97582 9

The latest episode in the ongoing saga of Lieutenant Luis Mendoza and the other folk in the Los Angeles police department contains the usual assortment of heists, muggings, robberies and killings—and also one cleverly plotted murder that takes Mendoza all the way to Paris, France for its solution. The domestic life of these cops is cloyingly bland—but there no bad apples in the department?—but the whole thing is put together with Dell Shannon's usual neat professionalism.

L. A. TAYLOR
One for the Books
189pp. Hale. £7.50.
07090 1192

Marge Brock, a forty-year-old redhead struggling to support a family as a freelance researcher, is employed to get up the background for a book on unsolved murders, and discovers a series which comes uncomfortably close to her own life; Pleasantly low-key, unpretentious—if a little over-domestic—US import.

JONATHAN VALIN
Natural Causes
258pp. Collins. £6.95.
0002313804

Cincinnati private eye Harry Stonor is called in by the sponsor of a popular daytime soap opera to avert any possible scandal that might arise after Quentin Dover, the show's chief scriptwriter, is discovered decomposing in the shower stall of his suite in a lavish Los Angeles hotel. As Stonor digs into Dover's past, the cosy

front slowly peels off the world of soap. *Natural Causes* is Jonathan Valin's fifth Harry Stonor novel. Each has been an improvement on its predecessor, and the latest proves no exception to the rule. Valin has always told a powerful story, combining it with a cold glance at some of the values that Americans hold dear as apple pie. But now he has moved into a different league: the new novel is orchestrated almost as carefully as one of Chandler's (though without his sentimentality). With it Valin has broken out of the ruck and firmly established himself as the legitimate heir to the late Ross Macdonald.

JOHN BUXTON HILTON
Corridors of Guilt
184pp. Collins. £6.95.
000231388 X

Although John Buxton Hilton retired his policeman, Superintendent Kenworthy, some books ago, he keeps finding new jobs for him to do: sensibly, because Kenworthy's blend of patience and intuition works best when untrammelled by official procedures. Here Kenworthy is called in by that high-level investigative unit attached to the Cabinet Office (introduced in an earlier novel) to look into disturbing connections between an odd civil service department and a security firm staffed by ex-policemen. Well-written and quirkily original, *Corridors of Guilt* is as good an argument against early retirement as one is likely to find.

FREDRIC NEUMANN
Manoeuvres
376pp. Gollancz. £8.95.
0 575 03358 4

By *Catch-22* out of M*A*S*H, *Manoeuvres* is psychiatrist Abe Redden's account of some of his experiences while a captain in the United States Army, attached to the Psychiatric Unit of the 20th Station Hospital in Nuremberg, during the Cuban missile crisis. In this short period he foils an espionage plot, unmasks a gang of smugglers, solves a couple of murders and cures Sergeant Lingeman, a demolition expert, of his fear of heights. At its best, *Manoeuvres* is too funny to read without exorcising point: the high spot being a lecture by Redden's superior, Major Wormley—an out-and-out nut case—on nocturnal enuresis, followed by the practical application of his teachings to a squad of sulky bed-wetters. The author does switch at times rather disconcertingly between the comic and the tragic, bathos and pathos; the latter bringing with it a sentimentality which blunts the satiric edge. All in all, however, a genuine, 22-carat bonfo.

CLIVE EGLETON
A Conflict of Interests
247pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 33237 9

Karen Whitfield, a call-girl with a select clientèle, is tortured and killed in her expensive Wimbledon home. Detective Inspector Coghill begins the investigation, but is called off pretty sharply when he begins to poke his nose into areas which the security services consider too sensitive for an ordinary copper. Solid and professional, with good detail, but not an excessive amount of *élan*.

GERALD HAMMOND
Consin Once Removed
190pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0 333 35811 9

Keith Caldwell, the Borders gunsmith whose eye has reared amorally through five previous novels by Gerald Hammond, has become almost domesticated since acquiring a wife and child. But the old Adam reawakens when he gets skewered through the shoulder with a crossbow bolt, and it turns out that someone is very much interested in one of the antique guns he's brought back from a busman's holiday in France. As always, a very workmanlike job: amusing, well put together, and spiced with a good deal of incidental information on guns, ancient and modern.

Months and monsters

C. R. Dodwell

P. MCGURK, D. N. DUMVILLE, M. R. GODDEN and ANN KNOCK
Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile: Volume 21, An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany (British Library Cotton Tiberius B V Part I)
285pp. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger
(distributed in the UK by Allen and Unwin).
£490 (paperback, £440).
0044200498

Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile, Volume Twenty-one, presents a black-and-white reproduction of the manuscript British Library MS Cotton Tiberius B V part I, with the four of its original leaves which are now in MS Cotton Nero D II. This is preceded by a 109-page scholarly introduction, which is lavishly illustrated with no less than 149 comparative pictures and by ten colour illustrations from the Tiberius manuscript itself.

The manuscript is very much of a miscellany, with its lists of Roman emperors, its genealogies of Anglo-Saxon ruling houses, its fragmentary life of St Nictolus, its added annals of Battle Abbey and so on. And it was already such when it passed as a single volume into the hands of Robert Cotton between 1596 and 1621. After being damaged in the Cottonian Library fire of 1731, it was, however, divided and its leaves were inlaid and made single. The result of this has been to make particularly daunting any attempt at reconstruction, since the original prickings, the original rulings and original margin-widths have been largely, if not entirely lost. It is a measure of Dr P. McGurk's meticulousness that he has somehow surmounted these problems and is able to provide a persuasive reconstruction of the manuscript as it was.

On the whole, the various texts of the manuscript are not famed for their accuracy, and it is the illustrations that have made it well known. This is not only because they are delightful examples of Anglo-Saxon art but because they are secular and, with rare exceptions, all other Anglo-Saxon paintings are religious. The secular categories they cover are varied. The Occupations of the Months may be described as social since they represent agrarian pursuits; the map of the world is geographical; and other pictures might be loosely described as scientific, for those to Cicero's translation of a poem by Aratus are astronomical, and those to the so-called *Marvels of the East* (which come first) have some relationship to Natural History.

Occupations of the Months are, of course, known from surviving mosaics and drawings of Late Antiquity, but what is of great interest about these (which illustrate the Calendar) is that they concentrate their attention entirely on agricultural activities—ploughing for January, pruning for February, raking for March and so forth. The publishers have given us four of these Labours in colour, together with black-and-white plates of a related, and earlier, cycle for comparison. This other cycle, which is equally well known, is in another Cotton manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon period and takes the form of tiny, spirited drawings and not paintings. Contrary to earlier opinions, Dr McGurk's belief is that the two cycles derived from a common prototype which he suggests was Carolingian. No one would quarrel with the view that the first cycle, particularly, reflects stylistic influences from Rheims, but I do not think that we can go further than this on the evidence. Indeed, the pictures owe an observation of everyday life which was far more Anglo-Saxon than Carolingian. Though they may incorporate a few hints and suggestions from the past, these charming portrayals of country life are essentially English.

The Calendar and its Occupations of the Months are followed by computational material, and a historian of technology may, one day, perhaps also as a curious coincidence the facts that the earlier English had a special interest in the computation and that the computer was invented in England. The computus provided astronomical information from which reckonings could be made of the dates of the paschal moon, and thence of Easter and of the movable feasts, and McGurk carefully guides the reader through this part of the text. His naviga-

tional skills are certainly needed, for the text is far from having those qualities of accuracy and reliability that one associates with the computer. It is, basically, an ill-digested jumble.

Like latter-day recipe books, some secular manuscripts in the Middle Ages were compiled in a fairly inconsequential way, and this perhaps explains the insertion of a Mappa Mundi which has nothing to do with the texts. It has achieved some celebrity among historians of cartography because it is one of the earliest surviving world maps and the first to give the British Isles a recognizable profile.

A now lost map of the Heavens did, however, have some relevance, for it introduced an astronomical section—Cicero's translation of Aratus' poem. This, quite certainly, derives from a famous Carolingian illustrated manuscript, as Buescu has earlier argued, though it



The *Cyncephalus*, from *Marvels of the East*: reproduced from the book reviewed here.

Replacing the roll

N. G. Wilson

COLIN H. ROBERTS and T. C. SKEAT
The Birth of the Codex
78pp, with six plates. Oxford University Press
for the British Academy. £13.
0197260241

The most important development in the history of books before the age of printing was the change from the roll to the codex. C. H. Roberts's paper in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* xl (1954) has long been recognized as the standard treatment of the topic. Subsequent research and discoveries have persuaded Dr Roberts to issue not a reprint but a substantially revised and enlarged version, *The Birth of the Codex*, written in collaboration with T. C. Skeat, who has prepared the first seven of the thirteen brief chapters into which the book is divided. This kind of revision is greatly to be welcomed.

The transition from papyrus roll to parchment codex as the normal form of book was not a simple step. Chapter Two considers the relative merits and availability of the two materials. The very slow growth in the use of parchment is explained by referring to the subtle skills required for the production of a good-quality article; once these were developed it would still have been some time before suitably trained craftsmen existed all over the Roman Empire. That is no doubt correct; but one might conjecture that the yield per animal slaughtered would have been rather small in view of the size of animals before the era of selective breeding.

The original codex was a set of tablets, usually wooden and covered with wax. It is conceivable that Julius Caesar was the first person to make up folded sheets of papyrus in the same way. Parchment notebooks are attested perhaps by Horace and certainly in the first century AD. The parchment codex books mentioned by Martial are the first instance of their type, but appear to have been a short-lived and unsuccessful experiment.

Yet biblical manuscripts written before AD 200 were always in the form of papyrus bodies, and the surviving ones are a reliable sample

was in an idiosyncratic style, pioneered in the fourth century, which the Anglo-Saxon artist "modernized". From his wide experience of astronomical manuscripts, McGurk is able to initiate a discussion of the exact relationship between the two manuscripts and brings other later English ones into consideration. The Carolingian manuscript was incomplete when it came to England and McGurk considers that it was supplemented by another.

The pictures of the so-called *Marvels of the East* are of particular importance. They illustrate monsters believed for some two thousand years to inhabit the unexplored areas of the world, which continued to fascinate the Renaissance imagination as they had the classical—witness Othello's story of his courtship of Desdemona. They show us how the West imagined these mutants of the human and animal races in the eleventh century, and—despite one very free rendering—these pictures must also reflect earlier traditions. The monsters are by no means seen as frightening, but simply as fellow creatures of a different condition.

The chief editor is right to follow the traditional dating of the manuscript and place it in the second quarter of the eleventh century. Its provenance, however, is more controversial, since indications in the texts suggest both Canterbury and Winchester. The preference, here, for Canterbury, is well and cautiously put, though there are no very close connections with Canterbury pictures.

In terms of its texts, this manuscript is mixed and at times confused but, in terms of its illustrations, it is of very special interest. Indeed, it is the most important illustrated, secular volume that survives from Europe of the tenth and eleventh centuries. This facsimile of it is therefore to be warmly welcomed. Like the earlier volumes of this series, published by Rosenkilde and Bagger, it is very handsomely produced.

while among other Christian books the codex form predominates. The authors therefore infer that the Christians had chosen the codex form for copies of the Bible before AD 100. They show that the alleged practical advantages of the codex, though real enough, are considerably less important than has often been claimed, and therefore seek another explanation. Roberts's hypothesis of 1954, that Peter's auditors in Rome would have been used to parchment notebooks, and that St Mark as the first evangelist might have used such notebooks, which were then transmitted to Alexandria, where papyrus was the normal writing material, is now rejected as implausible, because neither St Mark's Gospel nor the church of Alexandria were so influential in early centuries as to be likely to impose a new pattern of book production on other circles. The authors now offer a more ingenious suggestion, that the explanation is to be sought in the practices of the earliest Christian communities, such as Antioch or Jerusalem, which might have borrowed the Jewish custom of writing rabbinic sayings on tablets of papyrus, and that they recorded the sayings of Jesus in the same way. This may well be right. The authors could perhaps have given more weight to a factor which they allude to tentatively, namely that the early Christians may have wished to emphasize the break in cultural tradition which their new faith implied.

Finally the authors turn to the question why the codex was used on occasion by the pagans even at a date when it is difficult to conceive that the example of the Christians could have been influential. G. Cavallo's view of the codex as the preferred form of the lower classes for their reading-matter is examined and found not to be borne out by the evidence at present available. No other view is supported by much evidence, and one must merely wonder if the experiments of Julius Caesar or Martial's bookseller retained a small place in pagan practices.

The original publication could be bought as an offprint for four shillings and sixpence. The new edition, admittedly twice as long, and better illustrated, is priced beyond the means of any student and many libraries, and the lavish production is marred by quite a number of misprints.

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The eighty-fifth volume of the annual *Book Auction Records*, edited by Wendy Y. Heath (508pp. Folkestone: Dawson. £50. 07129 1031 X) lists prices realized between August 1982 and July 1983 at sales held by fifty-four firms in the United Kingdom, Western Europe, South Africa, Australia and North America. It excludes most multiple lots, for obvious practical reasons, and any lot fetching less than £50, £100, or (for Europe) the equivalent of £100. The volume's two sections are of printed books and atlases, and of printed maps, charts and plans. Those who wish to search concerning manuscripts should consult its main rival, *American Book Prices Current*, which is similarly international in coverage.

We regret a misprint in the final sentence of Blake Morrison's review of David Lodge's novel *Small World* in last week's TLS. The closing words should have been: "It would be a pity to have to wait ten years to see them back in action."